JUNE-JULY 2023
GO! DRIVE & CAMP
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55

#55

CAMP FOOD HOT POTS FOR COLD NIGHTS

go! Drive&Camp

JUNE-JULY 2023 | ISSUE 55

Overberg

Two new camping spots in Stanford

Karoo tripping: discover Amalienstein and Zoar

MY WHEELS

THREE TIMES A LADY

Reader shows his love for his '84 Land Cruiser

CARAVAN TEST

ARMADILLO XTR312

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A river of joy

A few months ago, my daughter and I spent a few days together in a canoe on the Orange River, along with a bunch of Grade 7 schoolmates and their parents. We set off near Noordoewer, travelled downstream, and eventually got out near Aussenkehr four days later.

I'll be the first to admit that I wouldn't have done something like this on my own. The brochures wouldn't even have caught my eye. Firstly, because nobody would ever mistake me for a rower, and secondly, because I never thought it would be something my child would enjoy. Just goes to show what I know…

Friends of ours had been on that very same trip last year. Shortly before our departure, we had lunch with them to get some tips. ("Pack more beer. No, even more than that!") After that, the excitement in our household was palpable.

The kilometres to the Namibian border flew by. I told my passengers that I hoped we wouldn't get caught behind a bus full of people at the border. But all of us – a total of 40 parent-and-child couples – had clearly all left Cape Town at the same time that morning and showed up at the border in quick succession. After half an hour of standing in line at customs, I said to the father who had joined me in my car: "We were worried about a bus for nothing… we are the bus!"

On the other side of the border, I grew a little nervous. I grew up in a small town in the Free State Goldfields, and there are no canoes in that part of the world. A 15-minute chat about the dos and don'ts of canoeing wouldn't suddenly turn me into a skilled rower. Especially not on the Orange River.

The first night, I watched the river and realised that there was an early left turn that seemed like it could be problematic. My child must have seen the concern in my eyes and kindly asked that we don't make a fool of ourselves on the first bend. I assured her that if we didn't capsize at least once during the next four days, it would be sheer luck. It would have absolutely nothing to do with skill.

We made it past that first bend – mercifully unscathed. In fact, we made it all the way to the notorious Sjambok rapid. It was actually a relief when the canoe tipped over. Many had fallen in before us, and many more would after us, but we had finally done it. Now we felt ready for whatever the river had in store.

It was a wonderful experience – if I could momentarily forget about my favourite hat I lost somewhere along the way. The best part was watching the Grade 7 children play like… well, children when we set up camp in the afternoons.

As parents, we remarked how delightful it was to see the children, who are so eager to grow up, simply having a blast in nature. Although my daughter couldn't stop talking afterward about the incredible experience, she also indicated that once was enough for her.

I have news for her…

Safe travels!

Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com

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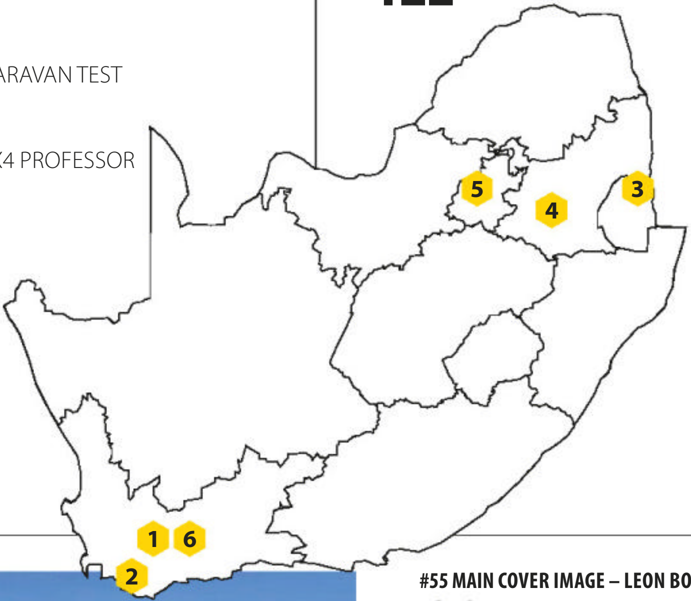

#55 MAIN COVER IMAGE – LEON BOTHA

> "Not only do you get an amazing view at Rivers End, but the owners share the space. Here we are on one of the largest stands we've ever camped on. Stanford is but a stone's throw away, as is Filicita Country Lodge, which we also visited. (Read more on p 44.)"

Camera settings Canon EOS 6D Mark II; f9; 1/640 sec; 35 mm lens; ISO 400

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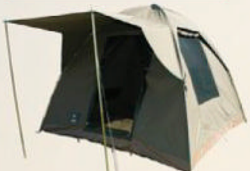
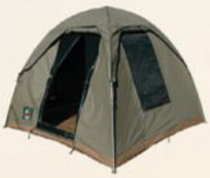


JUNIOR SAFARI BOW
2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m
R6 690^{00}

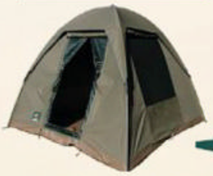
SENIOR SAFARI BOW
3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R8 340^{00}

SAFARI BOW TENTS



RANGER SAFARI BOW
2.1m x 2.1m x 1.8m
R4 290^{00}

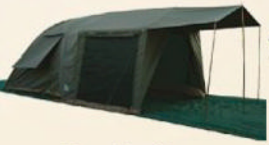
WANDERER BOW



JUNIOR WANDERER BOW
2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m
R4 920^{00}

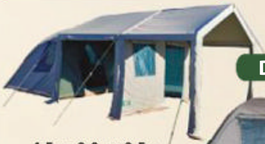
SENIOR WANDERER BOW
3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R5 710^{00}

SENIOR BAOBAB EXT



7.3m x 3.0m x 2.2m
(Extension size only)
R7 400^{00}

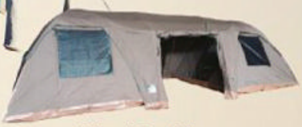
SENIOR DELUXE EXT



4.5m x 2.9m x 2.5m
(Extension size only)
R10 140^{00}

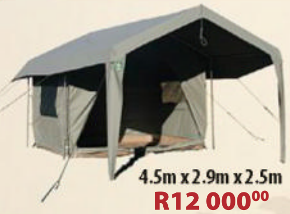
**EXTENSION SOLD SPERATELY. BOW TENTS NOT INCLUDED*

DOUBLE BOW EXT



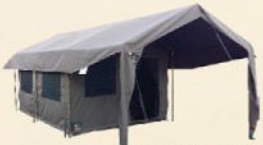
2.1m x 3.0m x 2.2m
(Extension size only)
R6 470^{00}

JUNIOR SAHARA



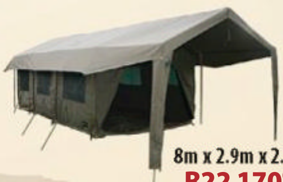
4.5m x 2.9m x 2.5m
R12 000^{00}

SAHARA DELUXE



6m x 2.9m x 2.5m
R16 310^{00}

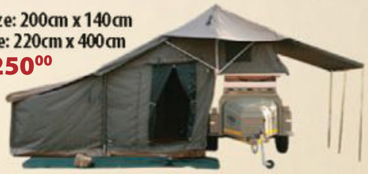
SAHARA LODGE



8m x 2.9m x 2.5m
R22 170^{00}

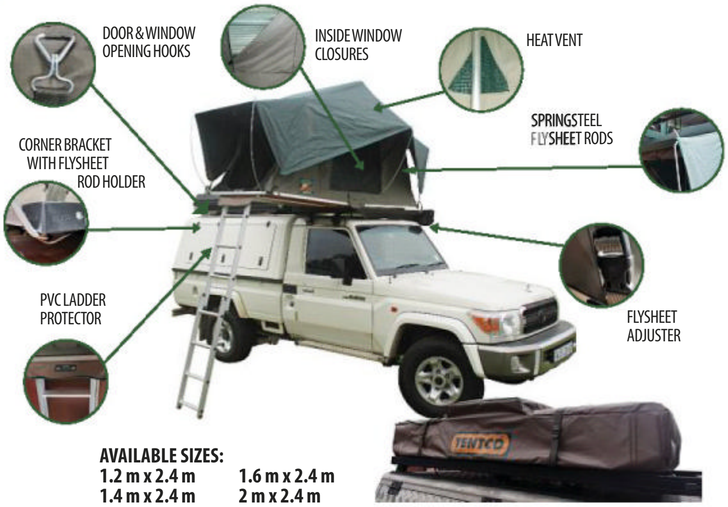
FAMILY TRAILER TENT

Board size: 200cm x 140cm
Floor size: 220cm x 400cm
R25 250^{00}



TRAILER NOT INCLUDED.

ROOFTOP TENTS


DOOR & WINDOW OPENING HOOKS
INSIDE WINDOW CLOSURES
HEAT VENT
SPRINGSTEEL FLYSHEET RODS
CORNER BRACKET WITH FLYSHEET ROD HOLDER
FLYSHEET ADJUSTER
PVC LADDER PROTECTOR
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1.2 m x 2.4 m
1.4 m x 2.4 m
1.6 m x 2.4 m
2 m x 2.4 m

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- 26 DENSITY FOAM MATTRESS
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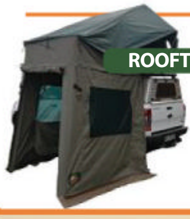
- INCLUDES EXTRUSIONS FOR FITMENT
- PVC COVER TO CLOSE TENT

FROM
R14 240^{00}

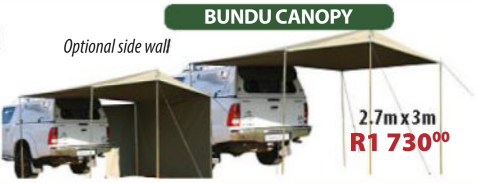
ROOFTOP PRO TENT



1.4m x 2.4m
R21 460^{00}

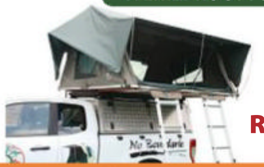
BUNDU CANOPY

Optional side wall



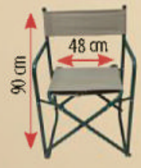
2.7m x 3m
R1 730^{00}

FAMILY ROOFTOP TENT



2m x 2.4m
R21 960^{00}

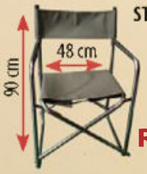
DIRECTORS CHAIR



Max weight: 150kg
R870^{00}

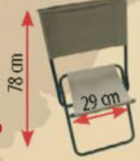
DIRECTORS CHAIR

STAINLESS STEEL



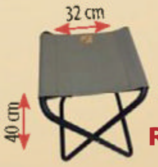
Max weight: 150kg
R1 010^{00}

FISHERMANS STOOL



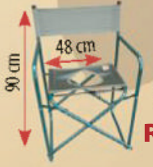
Max weight: 150kg
R450^{00}

BIKINI STOOL



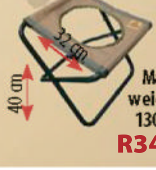
Max weight: 130kg
R320^{00}

TOILET CHAIR DELUXE



Max weight: 150kg
R870^{00}

TOILET STOOL



Max weight: 130kg
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- CAN CONVERT INTO WORK BENCH
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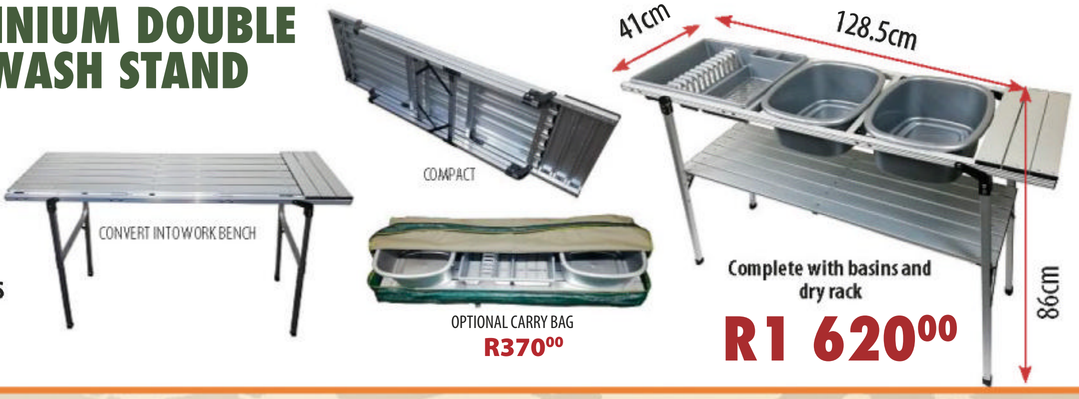
- 5.2 KG



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We love hearing what's on your mind! Write to us at **drivecamp@gomag.co.za** and please remember to give your full address and contact details. *Drive & Camp* reserves the right to edit and shorten letters – and publish them in the magazine, on the website, and elsewhere.

Time to hit the road

Before a recent getaway, I purchased the October-November 2022 and December 2022-January 2023 issues of *Drive & Camp* to read during our trip. But I didn't take any blank paper with me and ended up using the pages of your magazines for notes.

It was January, and schools had just reopened. For my wife Tracy and me, that meant it was time to hit the road. We embarked on a five-day journey, never straying more than three hours or 250 km from home. Dusty roads, rivers, mountains, sun, sea and, most importantly: no cellphone signal. Also, we'd be self-sufficient.

Our first stop was the mountains just outside Kareedouw, where silence welcomed us. Within 10 minutes, we were set up and enjoying an ice-cold beer – our journey had truly begun.

The following day, a fiery red sunrise heralded the new day while our coffee brewed. We had to find morning shade, as the sun got hot early on. As we sipped our coffee, a loerie – acting like a prize pigeon – flew from the distant cliffs over the river to find shelter in our shade tree. A bloated puff adder slithered from some more shade into the sun but disappeared again among the reeds. Meanwhile, a curious monitor lizard investigated our canoe on the sandbank.

We went looking for a beehive against the cliff, as there's a buzzing reminiscent

WINNING LETTER

Paul wins a cooler bag worth R220. Whether you're a camper, fisherman, or sports fan next to a cricket pitch, this cooler bag has room for a lunch box and a 1,5 ℓ cooldrink bottle. The lid also has space for a coffee flask. The interior is lined with PVC, which makes it easy to keep the bag clean and hygienic. The bag has a short strap that reaches over the top and attaches with a Velcro strip, as well as a longer shoulder strap if you're going to carry it over longer distances. It's an ideal picnic accessory or a padkos bag for a road trip. **winkel.weg.co.za**

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FAR FROM EVERYONE, CLOSE TO YOURSELF. The Strydoms prefer campsites that aren't too far from home. They do like these sites to be quite wild, though.

of the busy N2 highway near our home when inlanders rush to the sea. Something caught my attention in the long grass… and there I spotted a baboon spider. It darted like an arrow across the grass in search of other hiding spots. I sound like a politician recounting all this, but it's the absolute truth – everything happened on our first morning here.

We also went rowing. I was pushed to my limits and asked Tracy in the nicest way possible to not panic, but to simply look ahead. Otherwise, we'd crash into the rocks… heaven only knows why she wanted to row so fast and splash water everywhere. We survived, planted an umbrella in the shallow water, and continued to shelter from the sun. Small tilapia swam closer and nibbled on us, the little rascals.

The Defender's engine idled – in the blink of an eye, three days had passed. There was a steep incline to climb, but Tracy got out to walk it, as she doesn't like the bumping and jolting – and this stretch was particularly nasty. It was hot to boot. But Tracy pressed on, and I picked her up at the top.

After a quick pit stop in Kareedouw to restock ice, meat, and beer, we headed to Anglers' Paradise near Eersterivierstrand, where we spend two unforgettable days. Our stand was secluded and could only be reached by a 4x4 vehicle. We camped right next to the sea.

The sun was up early, but the weather suddenly changed, and we found ourselves in a whirlwind of wind and rain. The top of our rooftop tent and awning held up, but the sides were torn away, leaving us with minimal shelter. Water poured down from the heavens, and we emerged wet and muddy on the other side.

Cloudy weather and a soft rain bid us good morning the following day. We enjoyed the last day of our short break, watching kamikaze birds – seemingly tipsy – dive into the rough waves. You wonder if they'll make it, but then they pop up somewhere else, only to launch another "attack".

As we brushed our teeth, we spotted a snake catch a frog in a puddle that hadn't been there the day before.

We were never too far from home and had a fantastic time. You don't have to travel far or have deep pockets to enjoy great experiences.

What we do know is it's time to hit the road again.

PAUL STRYDOM
Gqeberha

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TONGA

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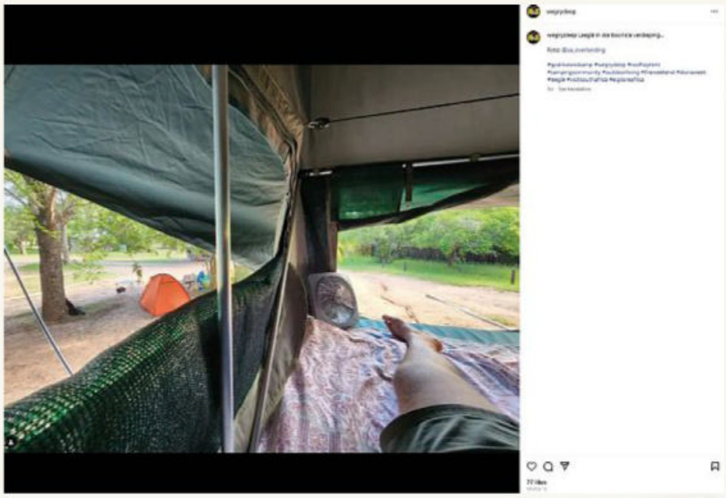

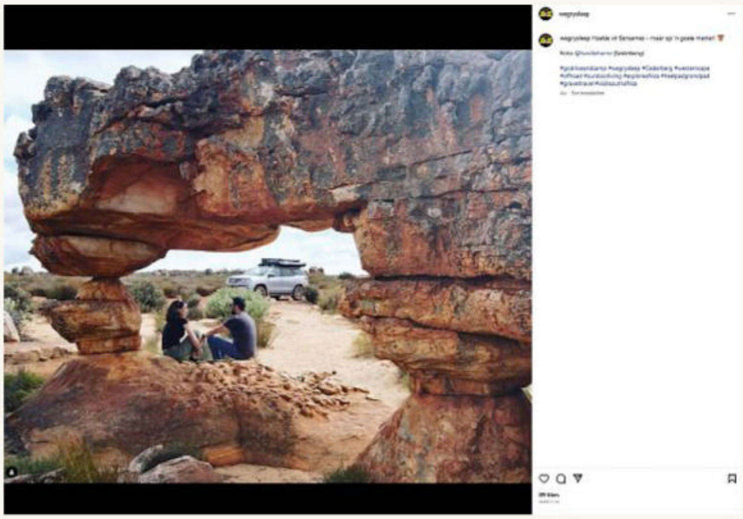

COMMENT OF THE **MONTH!**

After asking our followers on Facebook whether they prefer a quick weekend getaway or a long holiday somewhere worth exploring, it seems like **Agatha Ikking** is already where many of us want to be.

"I've been on a getaway for a few years already!"

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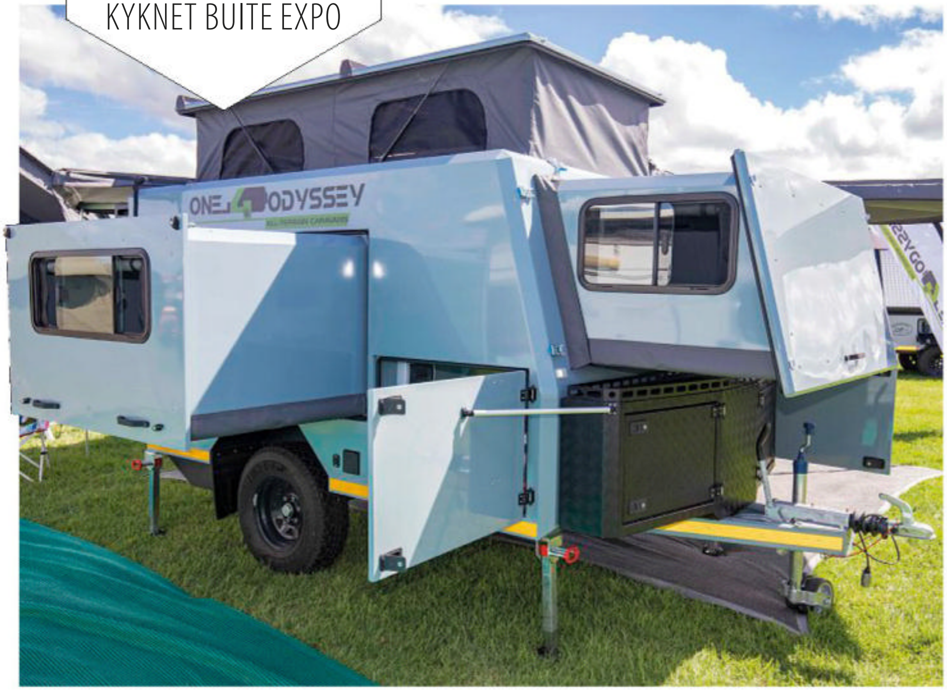

ON THE GO!

Newcomers steal the spotlight at the kykNET Buite Expo 2023 in Malmesbury in the Western Cape.

ONE4ODYSSEY

One4Odyssey is a new manufacturer that offers two similar off-road caravans: The Bush Chameleon 2 and 4. As can be inferred from the names, these models provide sleeping arrangements for either two or four individuals.

What makes the Chameleon unique are its sleeping arrangements. In the Chameleon 4, a bed pulls out like a drawer over the A-frame, with a second bed above the right wheel. The former is queen-size while the additional sleeping space is a double bed. In the Chameleon 2, that second double bed is replaced by a dinette.

The door is at the back – the upper part opens to the right and the bottom forms a step when opened downward. The spare wheel is mounted on the body, to the right of the door.

One4Odyssey doesn't deviate much from the basic layout of off-road caravans. The entire outdoor kitchen is on the left side. This panel has no less than five doors that open, with the fridge/freezer unit farthest to the left. The two-burner gas stove is also part of the sliding frame and is positioned at the end. A drawer with crockery, pots and pans pulls out from beneath the gas stove.

Your workspace is above the left wheel with shelves behind it in the body, and the sink pulls out from the rightmost cupboard. While the sink is part of the sliding frame, the drying rack has its own space on the right and fits inside the door. A drawer for glasses pulls out above the sink, and above this is a cupboard that can also be accessed from the inside.

The entire body and chassis are made of stainless steel, while the interior, doors, and pop-up roof are aluminium.

Standard items include crockery, a braai pan and two pots; the sink with its tap and drying rack, an indoor basin with a tap and a showerhead for the outdoor shower; a 150 ℓ stainless-steel water tank and pump; a six ℓ gas geyser; two 105 Ah deep-cycle batteries with a power system; a 160 W solar panel and outdoor and indoor LED lights; two gas cylinders; an L-shaped awning, and the interior cupboards with canvas doors.

The caravan has a 2,5 t braked axle, a 2 t coupler, and a GVM of 1 800 kg. The Chameleon 4 has a tare weight of 1 260 kg, and the Chameleon 2 is 40 kg lighter.

Prices Bush Chameleon 2 R475 000; Bush Chameleon 4 R495 000.

Contact ☎ 082 762 9956
🖱 info@one4odyssey.co.za
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MANIAC 4X4

Maniac 4x4 focuses on specialised and custom-made 4x4 products, but they have now introduced an off-road trailer: the Adventure Trailer. It's a typical off-road trailer with a rooftop tent, but there are a few innovations.

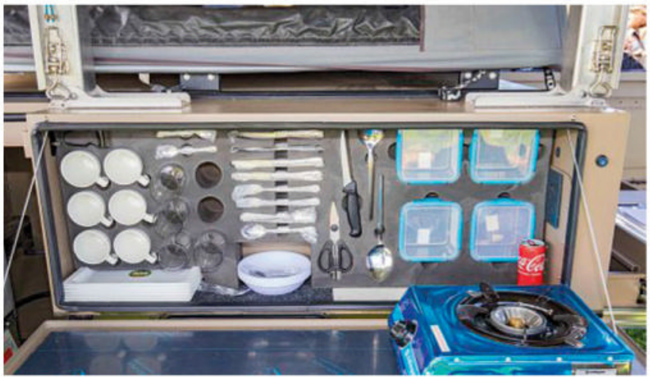
The most noticeable of these is at the rear. Two flat drawers pull out from the back, fitting no less than eight ammo boxes. Making this even more special is the stainless-steel sink located at the end of the lower drawer. This sink is mounted on a sliding frame and moves sideways to sit alongside the kitchen counter. It's a smart way to expand the kitchen.

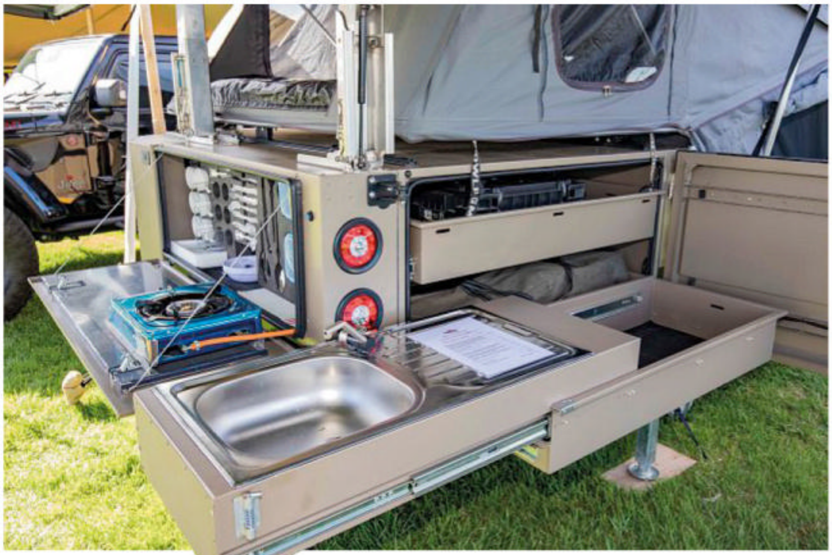
A single-burner gas stove can be found on the right of the counter, and the cupboard behind it in the body is equipped with foam cut-outs. It can accommodate everything from cups, glasses, plates and cutlery, all the way through to serving spoons, kitchen scissors and four plastic containers with lids.

Right next to this, the fridge/freezer pulls out from the body, providing a rather luxurious kitchen for a trailer of this size.

The Adventure Trailer has a GVM of 1 500 kg and a tare weight of 630 kg, equipped with 16" wheels. The axle is rated for 1 600 kg and the coupler can handle 2 000 kg. The chassis is made from galvanised steel and the bodywork is a combination of aluminium and stainless steel.

> The chassis is made from high-grade galvanised steel and the bodywork is a combination of aluminium and stainless steel





The basic trailer costs R198 000, but for another R156 500 you can equip it properly. The two rear drawers are an extra R16 000 and the fridge/freezer's sliding frame R6 500. The Victron electrical system (R17 500) includes a 105 Ah deep-cycle battery, lights, and various power points. The water system, featuring a 170 ℓ aluminium water tank, high-pressure water pump, and stainless-steel sink with mixer tap, comes in at R30 000; all the gas components such as the 4,5 kg gas cylinder, regulator, gas geyser, and single-burner gas stove are R13 500; a swinging spare wheel rack costs R12 000; the 270° awning is R21 000 and the tent, which includes a shower cubicle, is R40 000.

Price R354 500 (equipped).

Contact ☎ 021 552 4477 info@truestart.co.za maniac4x4.co.za

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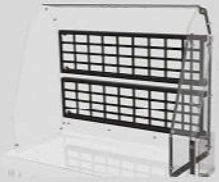
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OVERLANDER

Last year, Overlander was one of the new faces with its Custom 590 model. It's a luxurious double-axle caravan made of glass reinforced plastic, designed to tackle the bush. The Custom 490 was already in the pipeline, but the planned model underwent some changes, culminating in the brand-new Custom 500.

It's a single-axle trailer, yet almost a clone of the 590. The width (2,1 m), height (2,6 m), head height (1,88 m), and wheel track (1,67 m) are the same, but the length differs: the 500 is 90 cm shorter than the 590 – 6,4 m compared to 7,3 m.

Other than the wheels, the placement of the fridge is the most noticeable difference. The 590's fridge is located to your left as you enter, but you also get a fridge/freezer (a 50 ℓ National Luna) positioned right in front of you as you step in. In the 500, the fridge shifts to where the 590's fridge/freezer is located, and in the doorway, you get two cupboards with a microwave oven above them.

The power box with all the circuit breakers also moves toward the door, in the little cabinet to your right. In the 590, it's located in a cupboard just past the bed. The shower is slightly smaller, and there's a bit less space on either side of the bed compared to the 590, even though the beds are the same size.

The 500 also has two outdoor sinks, but they are positioned slightly closer together because there isn't a smaller bowl – as seen in the 590 – between the two.

The nose also changes, becoming more rounded. Besides aiding with wind resistance, it also provides more headroom above the sink in the bathroom.

The 500's GVM differs by 1 000 kg compared to that of the 590: 2 000 kg for the 500 and 3 000 kg for the 590. The tare weights are respectively 1 790 kg and 2 480 kg.

Prices Custom 500 R775 146; Custom 590 R874 420

Contact ☎ 021 552 7752

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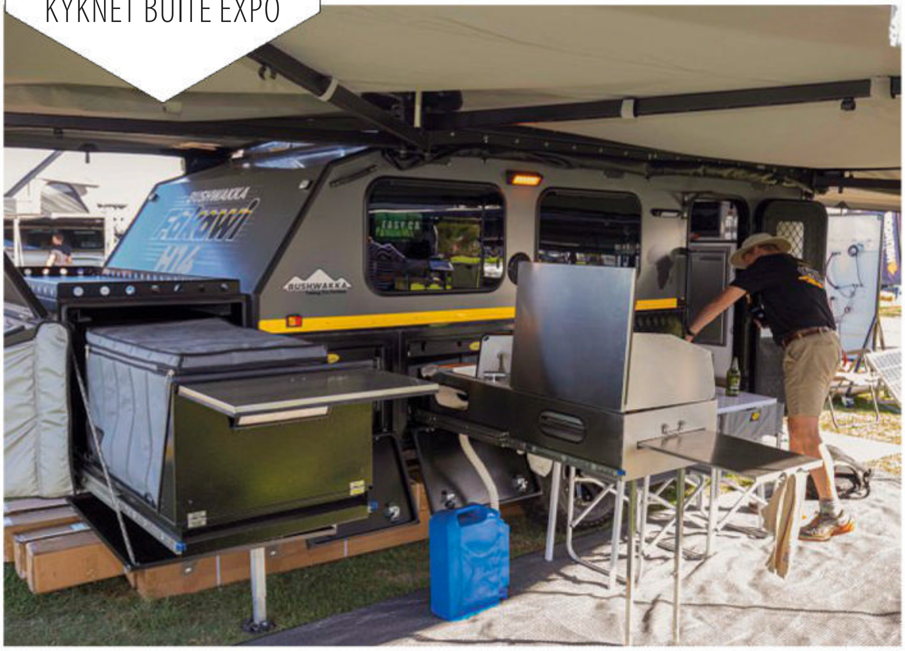
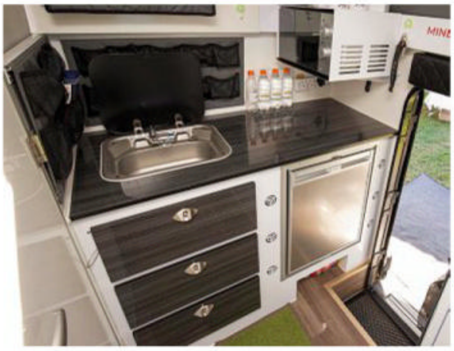




BUSHWAKKA

Local campers now are also able to consider Bushwakka's Fakawi model from Australia.

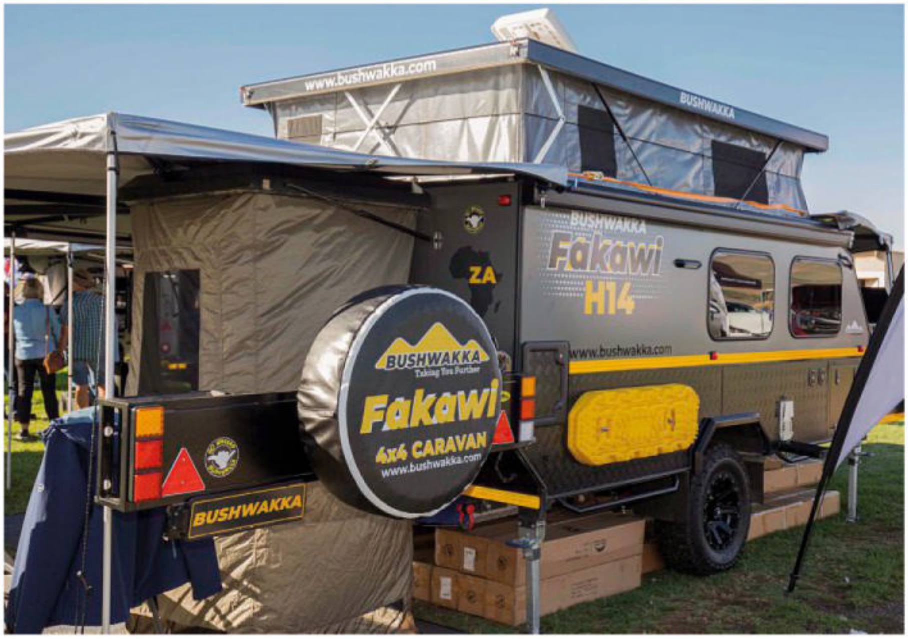
Bushwakka is a local manufacturer known for its robust off-road caravans. The Fakawi thus offers buyers an additional choice, with two models to select from: the H14 and the H15. The figures refer to the caravans' length in feet, but the sleeping configurations also differ. The H14 is designed for a couple, while the H15 can accommodate up to five people.

The chassis is made of galvanised steel, the body framework of aluminium, and the synthetic panels are also overlaid with aluminium layers. The Fakawi models come with electric brakes, but these are replaced locally with overrun brakes. It has a GVM of 2 330 kg and a tare weight of 1 830 kg.

We got to see the H14 at the show, and it features independent suspension with dual shock absorbers. There's a four-burner gas stove and a fridge/freezer in the outdoor kitchen, but there's also a small kitchen inside. It's to your right as you enter: the fridge is first with drawers alongside, and above it is a countertop featuring a recessed sink. The microwave oven is positioned horizontally and a bit above the fridge against the panel, and in the opposite corner as you enter, there's a separate wet room.

The caravan also includes two water tanks (120 ℓ and 80 ℓ) and a grey-water tank of 45 ℓ. The gas-electric geyser is 14 ℓ and the power system even includes a 2 000 W inverter. A 17-inch TV screen is also part of the package.

Price Fakawi H14 R695 000;
Fakawi H15 R750 000
Contact ☎ 023 342 3438
🖱 admin@bushwakka.co.za
🖱 bushwakka.co.za

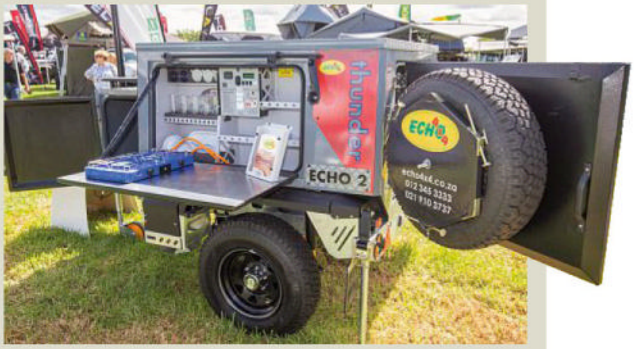


ECHO

Echo has rebranded its Echo 2 as the Echo 2 Thunder. It's hard to miss, as the name 'Thunder' now prominently features on a large red sticker at the rear.

The manufacturing process of the Echo's three doors has changed, no longer being formed with a press but rather folded – the same applies to the Echo 5 model.

Price R114 950
Contact ☎ 012 345 3333 or 021 910 3737
🖱 echoacc@echo4x4.co.za
🖱 echo4x4.co.za



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NOMADIK

Nomadik is a new manufacturer with Riaan Bekker at the helm.

Essentially, the Nomadik is a 'blank' off-road trailer you can outfit to suit your needs. It comes standard with a roof rack to fit a rooftop tent, and a sliding frame pulls out from the rear door. The spare wheel is mounted on a swing frame and sits in front of the rear door.

Above each of the two mudguards is a cupboard, the door of which opens downwards to provide a work surface, and behind this panel are two small shelves each.

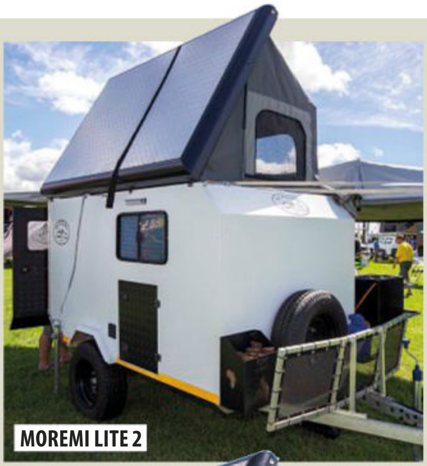
Drawers pull out from the left front cupboard that you could typically use for groceries if you set up your outdoor kitchen here, with something like a gas stove on the adjacent surface. But if you, for example, decide on a rooftop tent with an annex that opens over this area, you could also use these drawers for clothing.

The most noticeable thing about the new camper is its colour. Red, blue, and orange models were on display at the show, but Riaan says the trailers are available in any colour.

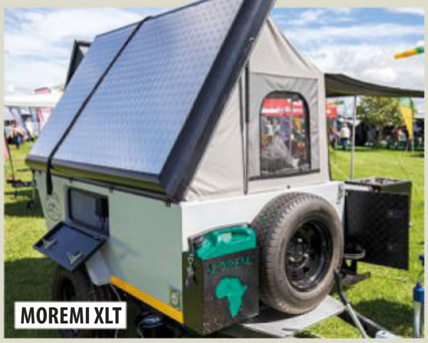
The tare weight is 380 kg and the GVM is 750 kg. The chassis is made of galvanised steel, and the aluminium body is powder-coated. It's 2,6 m long, 1,8 m wide, 1,45 m high, and has a 1,6 t axle with 15" wheels.

Price R80 000.

Contact ☎ 084 984 6785 info@nomadiksa.co.za Nomadik Trailers



MOREMI LITE 2



MOREMI XLT

CUSTOM CANOPIES

Custom Canopies has modified two of its models. The nose cone has been removed from both the Moremi Lite and XLT, and now serves as the location for the spare wheel, which was previously part of the chassis.

The Lite's fixed panel above the left wheel has been replaced with a fold-down work surface. The cupboard behind this was previously an interior one. The door is at the back and used to open upwards. Now it opens sideways, providing a better doorframe height. The floor where you enter has also been extended by 300 mm, giving you more space next to the bed. (The bed is now built in.)

Just like the Lite, the XLT gets an additional small cupboard, but on both sides above the wheels. The battery now finds a place in the right-hand side cupboard.

Prices Lite R145 000; XLT R95 000

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BADGER

Badger is primarily known for its Extreme model, and for the first time, potential buyers at the expo could see the new Badger Lite.

Badger has three models, the one between the Extreme and Lite is called the X-Over. However, the fibreglass bodywork is essentially the same. For a trailer of this size, the Badger has no equal when it comes to space after setting up – thanks to the unique way the king-size bed unfolds.

The Lite is the only model that can be towed with a regular driver's license (it has a GVM of 750 kg), but it also doesn't have brakes. Compared to the other two's tare weight of 1 240 kg and 950 kg respectively, the Lite is just 560 kg. The other two models use 16" and 15" wheels, while the Lite has 14" wheels.

Standard equipment includes a 70 ℓ water tank; 75 ℓ Flex fridge/freezer; washing area; two-burner gas stove and gas cylinder; LED lights; a Victron charger, DC-DC charger, and a 100 Ah lithium battery.

Price R249 000

Contact ☎ 082 490 1117

🖱 katie@badgercaravans.co.za

🖱 badgercaravans.co.za

ELXV

Elite Luxury Off-road Vehicles has showcased the smallest of its Ghari range, the 3.7. ELXV made its debut at last year's Caravan Show and introduced a variant of its Ghari 4.7 at the same show this year.

This is the first time potential buyers could get a closer look at the Ghari 3.7. The Ghari range generally comes with an aluminium chassis that also includes Al-Ko's Enduro X independent suspension.

Not only is the Ghari 3.7 the shortest of them all (3,7 m), but it also weighs less. The two larger models have a GVM of 2 000 kg and 2 100 kg respectively, where the 3.7's is 1 900 kg. Empty, the 3.7 weighs 1 300 kg compared to the other two's 1 400 kg and 1 500 kg. Thus, the load capacity of all three is the same: 600 kg.

Equipment such as the power system (Victron); two 325 W solar panels; two 200 Ah lithium iron phosphate batteries; a 12 V 10 000 BTU air-conditioner and 14 ℓ Hansen geyser are used on all models. The 3.7's inside fridge is located to the right in the door and the air-conditioner next to it with the wet room in the opposite corner. The queen-size bed is built in at the front with two huge windows on either side.

Price R597 000

Contact ☎ 084 550 2820 or 082 444 2850

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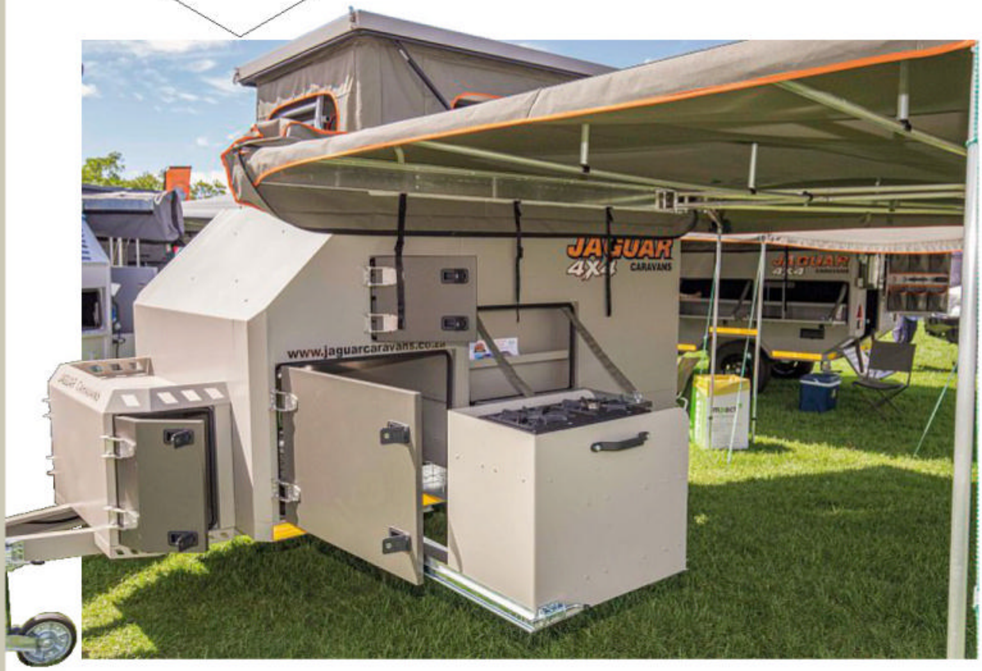


JAGUAR

Jaguar has revamped its Zazu 2 model, with changes including a new chassis. The Zazu was the last model to have a galvanised chassis and aluminium body, but now – just like the rest of Jaguar's models – the entire trailer is built from stainless steel. (The pop-up roof is still made of aluminium.)

The Zazu is aimed at drivers with a regular driver's license, which means its GVM is 750 kg (tare weight 650 kg). However, you have the option for brakes, which raises the GVM to 1 600 kg, and 15" wheels. The axle is rated for 1 600 kg, and the 14" wheels are standard.

The track width has also been adjusted and is now 1 570 mm compared to the previous 1 800 mm.

The window in the left panel has been replaced with a countertop above the wheel. Above the countertop are two shelves with two 220 V sockets.

The slide-out frame with space for a fridge/freezer and a gas stove is standard.

Price R258 750
Contact ☎ 073 333 5554
🖱 jacques@jaguarcaravans.co.za
🖱 jaguarcaravans.co.za

Prices were valid for the duration of the show and may differ from the prices in regular trade.

COMFYCAMP

The ComfyCamp, which made its debut last year, is back – with a few changes.

The pop-up roof now has gas struts to help with lifting. The roof is 200 mm lower than before, and there is now only 800 mm between the body and the roof.

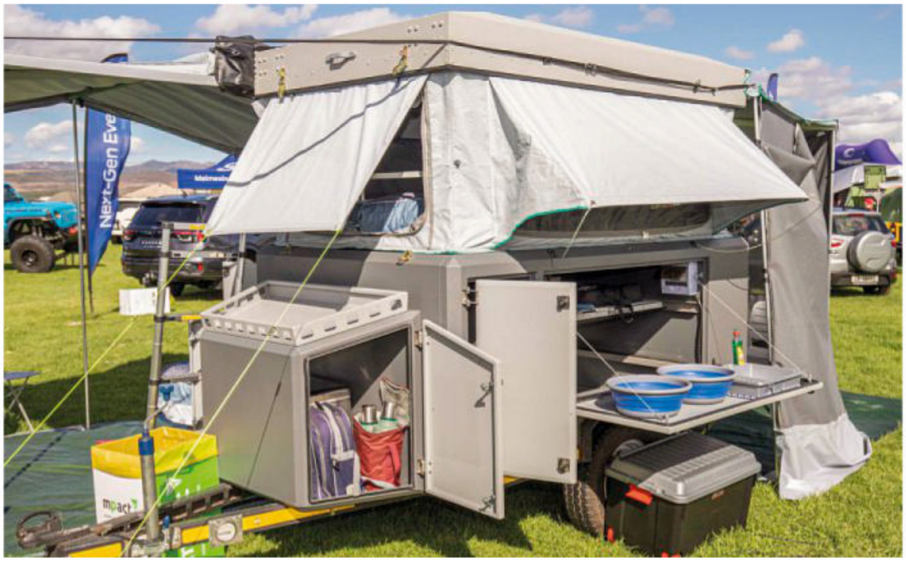
The tent is now from Howling Moon, who customised it for the ComfyCamp. The 270° awning now extends 1,5 m past the front corner of the ComfyCamp.

The large open cupboard in the middle of the body has gained a shelf, and there is now a door in front of the kitchen drawers.

The trailer has a galvanised chassis and an aluminium body, and instead of the powder coating, the trailer gets a Raptor layer.

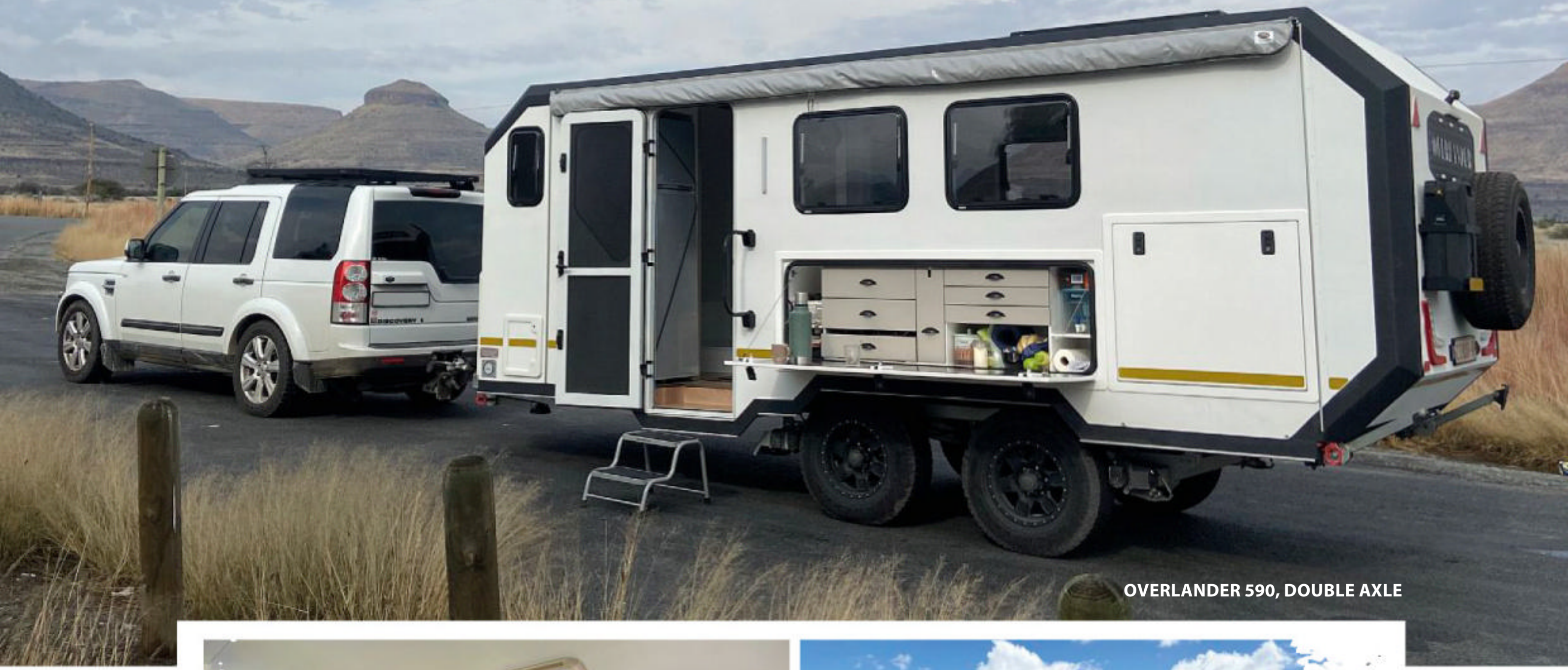
The GVM is 750 kg, and depending on the variant, the tare weight is 495-555 kg. The ComfyCamp is available with beds for two or four people, and both have a Standard and Executive variant.

Price R198 000-R246 250
Contact ☎ 083 256 7748 of 082 924 6901
🖱 iaan@comfycamp.co.za
🖱 comfycamp.co.za



OVERLANDER

The Overlander off-road camper has been built specifically as a luxury, comfortable and quick setup camper. It has independent suspension, which enables it to travel over any terrain.


OVERLANDER 590, DOUBLE AXLE

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OVERLANDER 500, SINGLE AXLE

OVERLANDER 590 AND 500

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New from China

The Eastern car giant Chery recently announced two new car brands to be sold locally: Omoda and Jaecoo, and they are collectively referred to as the O&J Brand.

One model, the Omoda C5, is already for sale in South Africa through an astonishing 33 dealerships in eight provinces (none in the Northern Cape). Prices for the Omoda C5 starts at R447 900 and sister brand Jaecoo is set to arrive soon.

According to Zhang Guibing, General Manager of Chery International, the O&J Brand models are entering the market during the fourth window of opportunity in the automotive industry. This time, the window of opportunity is focused on new energy vehicles and technologies and intelligent mobility. At the same time, the world is shifting to sport utility models and crossovers, with more and more models in this segment entering the global Top 10 best-selling vehicles.

O&J Brand will specifically target buyers in the crossover and SUV segments and more specifically young people and those who are young at heart.

CHERY GLOBAL
SHANGHAI AUTO SHOW

OMODA JAECOO
JAECOO

Where the two brands will diverge is in their design approach. Omoda will focus on modern and sporty vehicles and Jaecoo will offer vehicles for the urban off-road enthusiast. O&J has set itself a target of 1.4 million sales by the year 2030.

Visit omoda.co.za

An end to Land Rover

The British manufacturer Land Rover Jaguar is officially changing its name to JLR. Four distinct brands will be sold under this "house of brands": Jaguar, Range Rover, Discovery and Defender. The name Land Rover will no longer be used.

"We love Land Rover, but there isn't as much equity as Range Rover, and Defender is increasing massively," says JLR's chief creative officer Gerry McGovern.

"The reality is Range Rover is a brand and so is Defender. Customers say they own a Range Rover. In luxury, you need absolute clarity. Land Rover Range Rover SV Autobiography doesn't give it," McGovern added.

Dropping the legendary name is not the end of the revolution at JLR. The company will henceforth electrify all its Jaguars. CEO Adrian Mardell said this was something that's "very personal" and "unfinished business" for him, having originally joined Jaguar 32 years ago. "The Jaguar of 32 years ago is where we're going back to and the right place for us to be."

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Ranger king of the hill

According to Naamsa, the organisation who monitors new vehicle sales and exports, sales of new vehicles are down by 0,2 % compared to the same time last year. The decrease is mainly due to a poorly performing economy and because far fewer heavy commercial vehicles and busses were sold this year. Light commercial vehicles like bakkies sold well, though, and the winner was the new Ford Ranger. According to Naamsa the sale of hybrid and electric vehicles increased by an impressive 62%. The top five brands according to sales are as follows:

Ford Ranger	**2 201**
Toyota Hilux	**2 187**
Volkswagen Polo Vivo	**1 510**
Toyota Carolla Cross	**1 281**
Suzuki Swift	**1 216**

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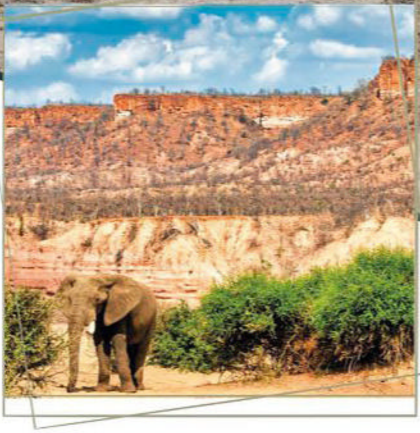

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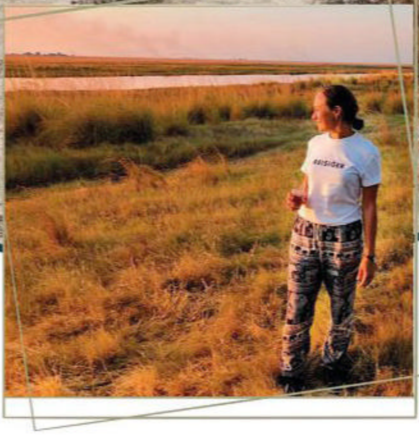

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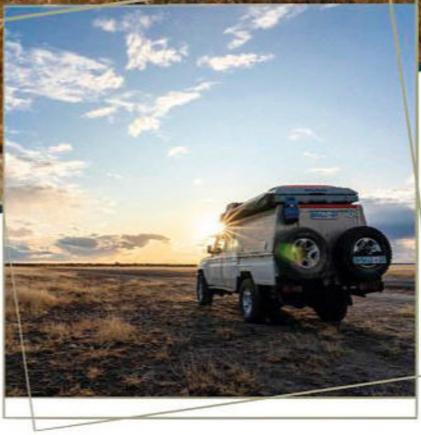

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Sportage gets a diesel

SPORTAGE GP

The latest Kia Sportage was launched in September 2022. That vehicle was only available in a 1,6 ℓ turbocharged petrol engine, but in May of this year a 1,6 ℓ turbocharged diesel engine has joined the ranks.

"As a flagbearer of the Kia brand's pioneering DNA, the new Sportage has garnered favour amongst press and customers alike," comments Gary Scott, CEO of Kia South Africa. "Demand has been strong across the range launched in September last year, and we're delighted that, as a finalist in the 2023 South African Car of the Year competition, it has already been recognised as a distinctive and progressive package. Such accolades reinforce our belief that Sportage truly is the ultimate urban SUV."

The new turbodiesel is equipped with an improved version of Kia's seven speed dual clutch transmission (DCT). The 1 582 cc turbodiesel deliwers 100 kW power at 4 000 rpm, and 320 Nm torque between 2 000 and 2 250 rpm. Kia claims its diesel Sportage accelerates from 0-100 km/h within 11,4 seconds and reaches a top speed of 180 km/h.

Visit kia.co.za

Jo'burg to Cape Town on one tank

Isuzu South Africa and Engen SA recently partnered to embark on the 'One Tank Challenge' that requires a vehicle to travel between the City of Gold and the Mother City on one tank of fuel. Ten journalists and influencers departed Johannesburg in five D-Max bakkies. The trip ended 1 452 km later on Signal Hill in Cape Town.

The vehicles were prepped according to standard sales configuration, except the tyres, which were inflated to the maximum recommended pressure. The D-Max with the best fuel economy was a single cab with a manual gearbox. It achieved 5,5 ℓ/100 km or 18,2 km/ℓ.

"No wing mirrors, aerials or any other items were removed from the vehicles. The diesel fills were monitored, and the tanks sealed under independent adjudication. Wheel balancing and alignment were checked to ensure that they were within the recommended specification," said Grant McCleery, former racing driver and driving instructor at Isuzu.

Although, the primary purpose of the Isuzu One Tank Challenge was to showcase the efficiency and utility of the D-Max bakkie, the opportunity was to also used to impart driving tips to drivers thus equipping them with requisite skills to get the best performance and value from their vehicles.

ISUZU
ONE TANK
ISUZU
JYL 081 EC

Jeep crowned prettiest baby

The brand-new, fully electric Jeep Avenger was named the UK's best compact car in 2023.

Jules Tilstone, Managing Director, Jeep UK, commented: "We are delighted to see the Avenger's exceptional customer offering in the compact car sector being recognised. The Avenger is rich with Jeep DNA, now in compact form with no compromise on interior spaciousness. We are charging forward with the next generation of electrified Jeep vehicles, and the Avenger is at the forefront of this exciting new chapter."

The new Avenger is an all-electric compact SUV that, at just four metres in length, is positioned in the rapidly growing B-SUV segment. Jeep says it's aimed at active people who are looking for an SUV with compact dimensions: the Avenger offers plenty of room and storage possibilities. Jeep adds that the Avenger was designed and built as a Jeep vehicle from day one and that the Avenger packs the Jeep DNA into a compact SUV with a unique combination of capability, style, functionality and technology.

With a range of up to 400 km, a new electric powertrain combines a 400-volt electric motor with 115 kilowatts, 260 Nm of maximum torque and a new 54 kWh battery. The introduction of the Avenger in Europe marks the beginning of the next phase of the electrification of the Jeep brand – the BEV wave. By the end of 2030, the Jeep brand's European sales will be 100% pure electric. It is currently unknown if the all-electric Avenger will come to our shores, but it's a possibility given growing local demand.

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Grand comeback

SUZUKI GRAND VITARA

Suzuki's Grand Vitara is back after a three-year absence. This time it shares its DNA with another Japanese manufacturer, explains **Cyril Klopper.**

Suzuki currently sells 15 different cars in South Africa, three of which carry the Vitara name: the compact Vitara Brezza, the regular Vitara – we reported on both in previous issues – and now the brand-new and larger Grand Vitara. During the launch of the latest Grand Vitara in George, Western Cape, we drove both the entry-level model, the manual 1.5 GL, and the flagship model, the 1.5 GLX Hybrid AllGrip with a six-speed automatic transmission. It might surprise you to learn which one we preferred.

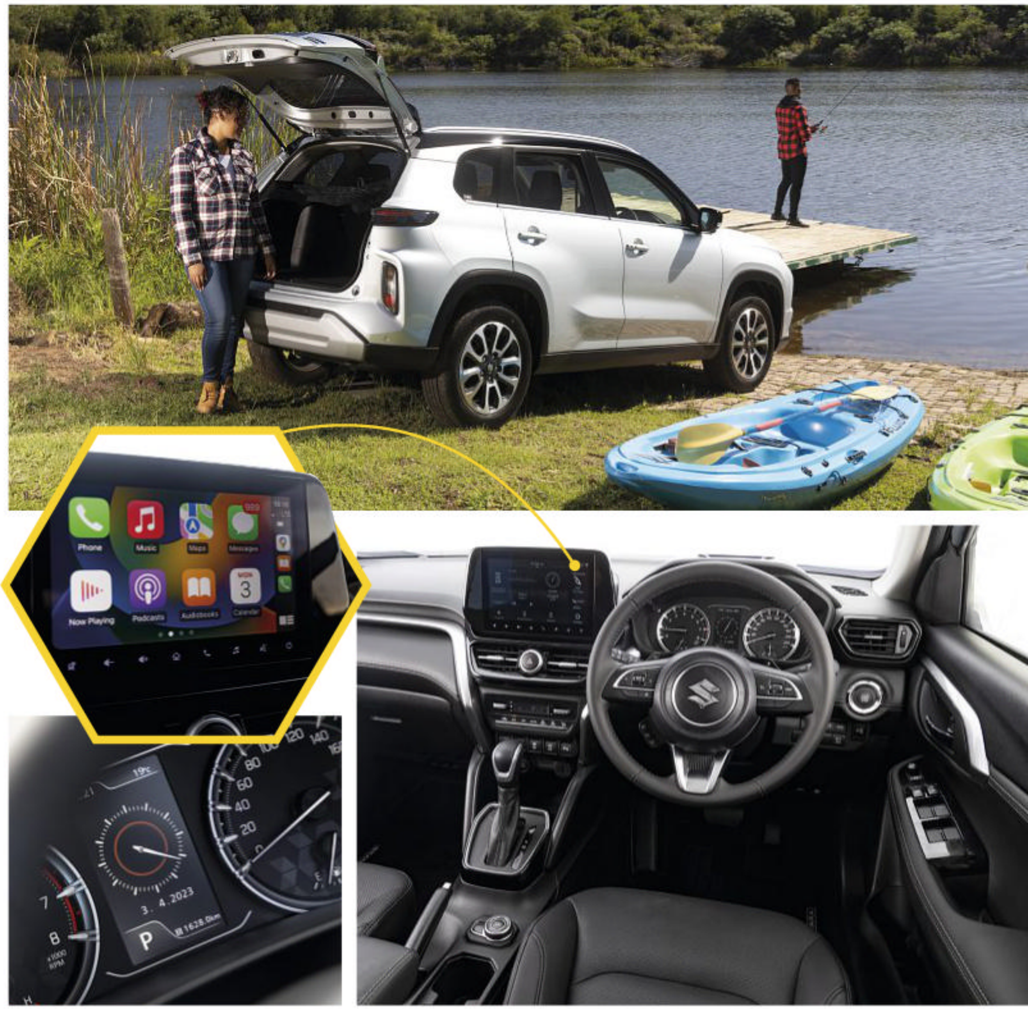
What do we have here?

If the Grand Vitara looks familiar, it's because it's virtually the same vehicle as the new Toyota Urban Cruiser. Both vehicles were developed by Suzuki and are built in Toyota's Kirloskar plant in India.

"The previous generation Grand Vitara was very popular and had an exceptionally long lifecycle in South Africa thanks to its popularity. The new model is a reinterpretation of the Grand Vitara concept and has been completely redesigned from the ground up – focusing on style, technology and ride comfort," says Brendon Carpenter, marketing manager for Suzuki Auto South Africa.

The interior

The GL model gets cloth upholstery for its seats, while the more expensive GLX has leather seats. The GLX features a 9"



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	1.5 GL 5MT
Engine	1 462 cc petrol engine
Power	77 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	138 Nm @ 4 400 rpm
Transmission	Five-speed manual
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Ground clearance	210 mm
Fuel consumption	7 ℓ/100 km
Tare weight	1 150 kg
Dimensions	4 365 (l) x 1 795 (w) x 1 645 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★ (GNCAP 2022, Toyota Urban Cruiser)
Warranty	Five years/200 000 km
Service plan	Six years/90 000 km
Price	R339 900

GRAND VITARA

BASICS. The styling was clearly done by Suzuki, although it is built by Toyota, as you can see the evolutionary trail from the previous Grand Vitara.

HYBRID
ALLGRIP

LOCK
SNOW
SPORT
PUSH AUTO
DRIVE MODE SELECT

touchscreen in the centre console, while the GL gets a slightly smaller 7" touchscreen – not that the difference is apparent. The GLX also has a head-up display for the driver, projecting information such as speed and gear selection. In our opinion, it's a gimmick, but it does contribute to your safety as you can keep your eyes on the road. Something that is not a gimmick is the sunroof, which is only available in the GLX. It's lovely to have extra light in the cabin on rainy days.

How does it drive?

We tackled the dirt roads over the Outeniqua Mountains and drove a little faster than we should have. The front-wheel-drive Grand Vitara clung to the gravel like glue. When the wheels did lose grip – which rarely happened – the traction control discretely intervened to restore order. The suspension suits dirt roads, and the electric power steering responds swiftly. It was the GL model's manual transmission that impressed us the most. It's been a while since we've had such a pleasant clutch underfoot – the gear throws are just the right length, and they change accurately.

Later, on our test drive of the GLX AllGrip, we were less impressed, as the manual transmission had spoilt us. The flagship model's automatic transmission operates smoothly, but the engine feels sluggish and uninspiring compared to the manual transmission model. The GLX is undoubtedly a comfortable ride, but the manual model is much more fun to drive.

The competitors

Suzuki says it competes with the Toyota Corolla Cross rather than the Urban Cruiser, and we understand why the company feels that way. In terms of luxury, the Grand Vitara is indeed better off – especially the GLX AllGrip – than the Urban Cruiser, even though the two share bodywork and engine. The Grand Vitara's other competition is the Hyundai Creta and Kia Seltos, both of which are front-wheel drive only.

Then, of course, the Grand Vitara also competes with its own stablemates. Should you buy the Vitara Brezza or the regular Vitara? Is the hybrid Grand Vitara AllGrip better than the front-wheel-drive Grand Vitara? Although we show the GLX's photos on these pages, our choice is the plain front-wheel-drive Grand Vitara GL with manual gearing. It costs R160 000 less than the flagship model, but it drives just as well, if not better, and we can do without frills like the induction charger for your cell phone and a rearview mirror that automatically dims. ●

FROM THE COMPETITORS

Compact SUVs with small-capacity engines and manual transmissions.

R347 400 **Toyota Urban Cruiser 1.5 XR**

Slightly more expensive than the Suzuki and has a shorter warranty period.

R437 900 **Hyundai Creta 1.5 Premium**

A comfortable drive, but it costs R100 000 more!

R436 995 **Kia Seltos 1.6 EX**

The Seltos is also considerably more expensive than the Grand Vitara

Sawubona, Eswatini!

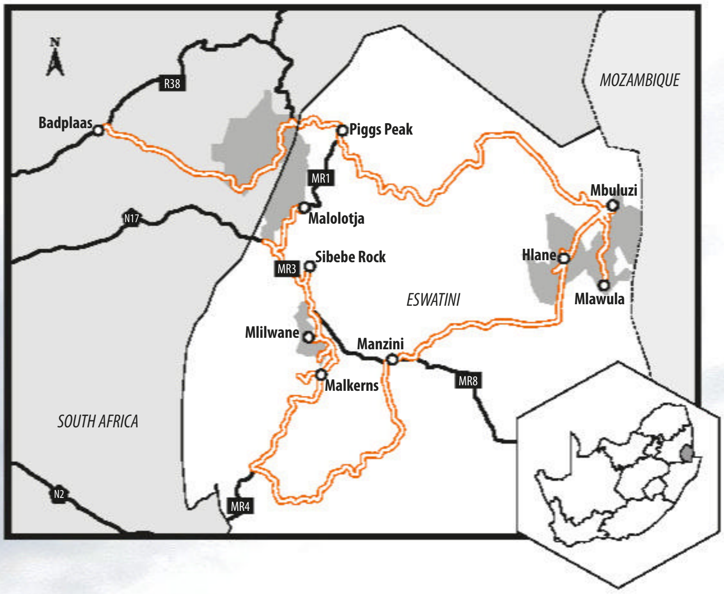
One seldom hears about the country formerly known as Swaziland, despite its location within South Africa's borders. Join us for a drive through its mountains and valleys to discover the beauty of this enchanting kingdom.

Words and photos **Cyril Klopper**

News coverage about Swaziland has always been sparse, except when King Mswati III's indiscretions make the headlines. Particularly after the COVID lockdown, it's as if the kingdom all but disappeared from the tourism radar. That's why we decided to check in and see if everything is still alright with our neighbours.

Our route starts in Badplaas, a Forever resort, about a five-hour drive from Johannesburg. We chose this as the starting point because it's the last camping spot before crossing the border into Eswatini. From here, we take the R541 regional road, also known as the Diepgezet Road, to one of the quietest border posts we've ever encountered. The first 40 km of the Diepgezet Road is tarred before it turns into gravel. 20 km later, you'll find the ghost town of Diepgezet.

We reported on this abandoned mining town, kept alive by Alan and Liz Eltze, in our November 2018 issue. Diepgezet, like other asbestos mining towns, was deserted in 2003, and the houses were initially in decent condition, even up to 2018. Today, however, there's hardly anything left of the town. The buildings have been stripped of doors, windows, carpets and metal.


N
R38
Badplaas
Piggs Peak
MOZAMBIQUE
MR1
Malolotja
N17
Mbuluzi
MR3
Sibebe Rock
Hlane
ESWATINI
Mlawula
Mlilwane
Manzini
MR8
Malkerns
SOUTH AFRICA
N2
MR4

> The first town you'll encounter in Eswatini is Bulembu. It's a beautiful place that started life as an asbestos mine in the 1930s

Even the roofs are gone, with the result that vegetation has completely engulfed the town. The coordinates are S26.00511 E31.07635 in case you want to see what it looks like when nature reclaims a place.

From Diepgezet, it's 15 km to the Josefsdal-Bulembu border post (open 08:00-16:00). It's a tiny border post with little traffic, and it won't take more than 10 minutes to cross. Remember your vehicle registration papers (or your bank's letter for border control) because South African customs won't let you through without it. On the other side of the border, you'll pay a road fund of R100 per car.

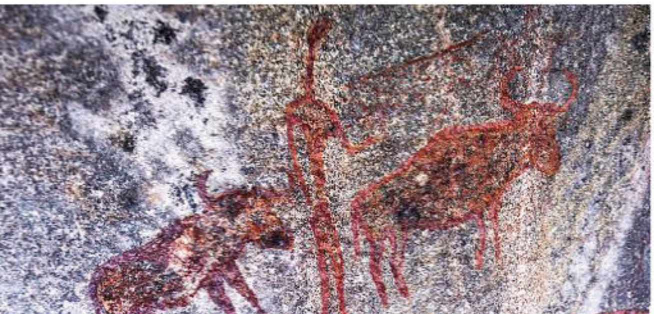
The first town you'll encounter in Eswatini is Bulembu. It's a beautiful place that started life as an asbestos mine in the 1930s. The town later became a ghost town, but unlike what happened with Diepgezet, a Swazi church restored the town, and the former mine houses now accommodate children who have lost their parents to the HIV/AIDS crisis, as well as their caregivers. Needy Swazis who would otherwise have had to beg also live here and work at the local dairy, honey farm, spring-water bottling plant, bakery and sawmill. There's a museum in the town and a lodge where you can stay if you want to climb Eswatini's highest peak, Emlembe (1 862 m) – a relatively easy five-hour hike from the village.

From Bulembu, follow a lovely forestry road through Eswatini's mountains to the town of Piggs Peak, named after prospector William Pigg (legend has it that Pigg's son married a Miss Hogg…), but the residents call their town Spiggy-Speegy, or simply Spiggy. This town, which originated as a gold mine in 1884, is clean, and topiaries adorn the main street – in fact, cleanliness is common in Eswatini.

At the Tintsaba craft market, you can purchase mohair items and woven placemats made from sisal. You can also take a tour of the sisal factory (R50 per person) to see how these fibres are harvested from sisal plants.

Now head south on the MR1 main road until you come across a large sawmill – turn left here onto the MR32. The turnoff (S25.98528 E31.23930) doesn't

CLEANLINESS. The streets of Piggs Peak (below left) is clean and Swazis are reminded by signage (insert) not to litter. Do visit the Nsangwini Bushman Paintings (below) and the old steam tractors at the sugarcane museum.



RESPECT
YOUR
KINGDOM
DO NOT LITTER
HLONIPHA
LIVE
LAKHO
UNGALAHLI TIBI

have a signpost, but there is a nameplate for Maguga Dam. Follow the tarred road for 7 km and turn off at the sign for Nsangwini Bushman Paintings.

After another 7 km on a bad dirt road that almost requires engaging four-wheel drive, you'll arrive at a hut with the words 'Rock Art'. As soon as you stop, a guide appears from the bushes. You pay R70 per person, and it takes 15 minutes to reach the rock face with the Bushman paintings. The footpath is rocky, and you need to be careful not to twist an ankle.

If you left Badplaas at 8:00 this morning, it should be around 12:00 now, and you have approximately 100 km left to cover for the day. Drive 2 km back on that dirt road that brought you here, then turn sharply right (S26.05064 E31.29668) onto a wide dirt road.

We now drive through rural areas with thousands of subsistence farms. You will regularly have to stop and wait for a herder to drive cattle across the road. Something we notice is that you don't see many dogs in Eswatini, nor beggars. Children will sometimes ask for sweets, but they accept it when you say no. In fact, they will then practice the English they learned at school by asking where you are from and making small talk.

The wide dirt road eventually crosses the Komati River – you also crossed it near Diepgezet this morning – and in time, you join the tarred MR6 regional road.

The MR6 becomes the MR5 4 km later, and you follow it past the Sand River Dam, after which it becomes the MR24. Don't worry too much about the road name changes; simply stay on the tarred road without turning off.

About 60 km after you got onto the tarred road, you'll see a sign for a sugarcane museum. Feel free to stop and visit if you want to learn more about the crop and taste sugar-cane juice. We are now in the home stretch of day one in Eswatini.

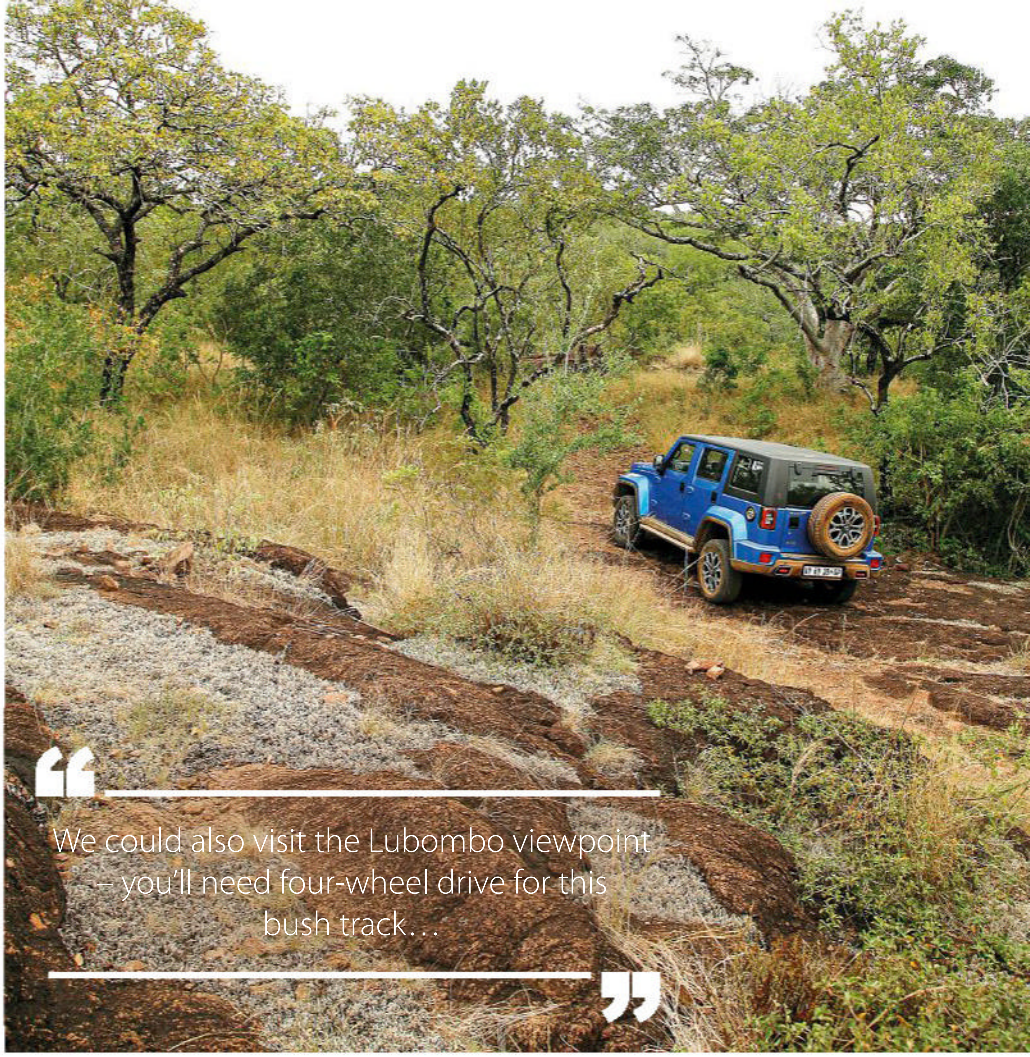
Your destination is the Mbuluzi Game Reserve. Access is free if you're camping, and the reception building has a fridge with cooldrinks, but no other provisions. The campsite has two spacious enclosures under shade trees, each with a tap but without electricity. There are also other stands, but they are open and without power and water. The ablution facilities are clean, and if you want a hot shower, you'll need to make a fire under a wood-fired water heater. The campsite is not fenced, and apart from crocodiles in the Black Mbuluzi River, the most dangerous animal in the Mbuluzi Game Reserve is a hyena. So, you don't have to fear for your life at night, but do keep an eye on small children when going for a walk in the bush.

The following morning, we go game-driving through three nature reserves that lie close together. First up is the Mbuluzi Game Reserve, where we spent the night. The ranger at reception will give you a map showing the routes through the reserve. If you're towing an off-road trailer, rather leave it at the campsite and pick it up when you're done with your game drive. During our visit, some roads in the game reserve were closed due to rain damage, and the ranger marked the prohibited roads on our map with his pen.

We could drive north to the Shewula viewpoint on the Black Mbuluzi River, but not continue on the Shangeni loop route. There is a turnaround spot at the Shewula viewpoint, but it's too tight if you're towing a trailer. We could also visit the Lubombo viewpoint – you'll need four-wheel drive for this bush track – and the circular route to the Mhohlo bird hide was so overgrown that it scratched our vehicle's paint. About 80% of the roads through the park were accessible during our visit, and you can expect to see giraffes, waterbuck, and zebras.

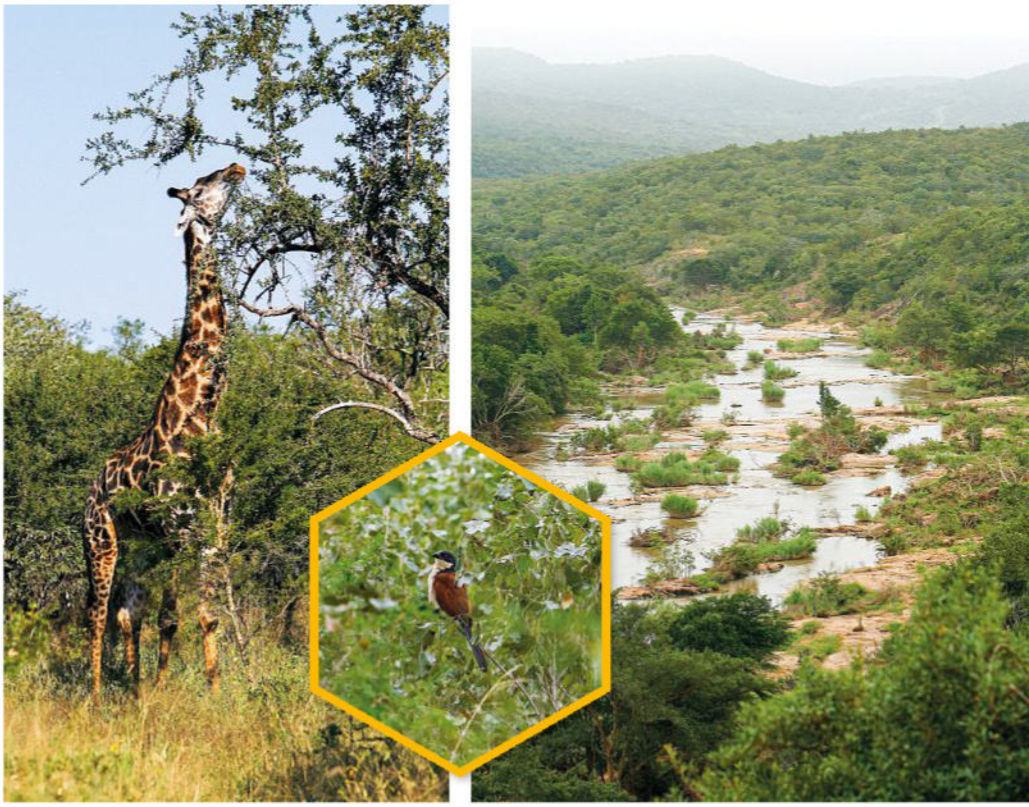
Leave the Mbuluzi Game Reserve the way you entered and turn left on a tarred road. Our next stop is the Mlawula Nature Reserve. The gravel roads in this park are passable with a regular sedan, but during our visit, some of the roads were so badly damaged by recent rain that we recommend a 4x4 vehicle. Here too, the most dangerous animal is a hyena, and visitors are encouraged to walk through the park rather than drive. In fact, the park is crisscrossed with hiking trails, and the only way to see attractions like the Mbuluzi rapids and Khabane and Waterfall caves is on foot. Do visit the Magadzavane Lodge in the reserve. There is a swimming pool, restaurant and bar with striking views. A day visit to the park costs R70 per person.

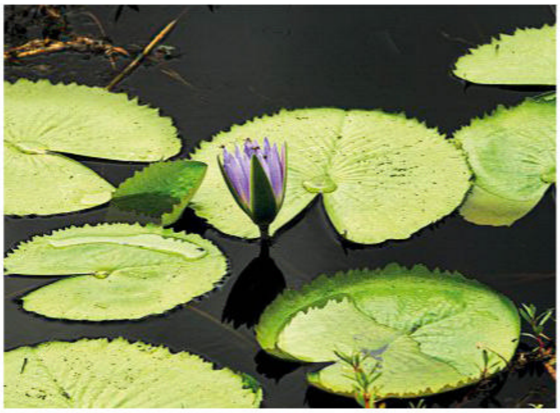
Drive back the way you entered Mlawula and turn left on the MR3 regional road. After 8 km, you'll find the Simunye Country Club. There is a large supermarket if you need to stock up on supplies and a garage to top up your rig's fuel tank.

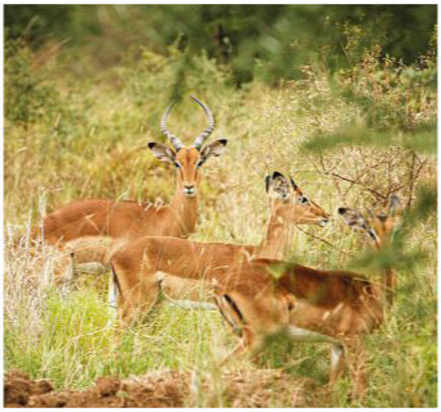


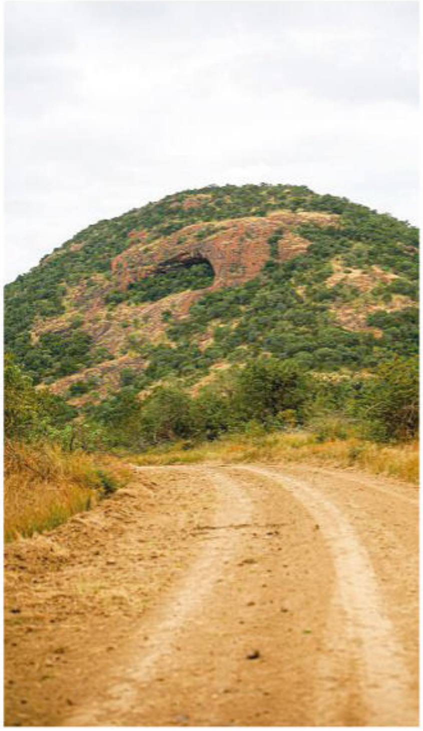
> “We could also visit the Lubombo viewpoint – you'll need four-wheel drive for this bush track…”

WILD. Most of Eswatini's parks will allow you to leave your vehicle wherever you want since few of them have dangerous predators. Do, however, give large game such as rhinos and giraffes a respectfull wide berth. Eswatini is also a paradise for bird watchers.









Just a short distance south of Simunye, enter Eswatini's largest conservation area: the Royal Hlane National Park. Hlane is the personal property of the Dlamini royal family and the land where the traditional *butimba* (or royal hunt) is carried out. The park allows visitors while King Mswati III is elsewhere and you can pitch your tent at Hlane's campsite.

In terms of game-viewing opportunities, Hlane is more geared towards overseas tourists. The self-drive routes were limited to just two roads during our visit, and if you want to see more of the park – and visit the fenced big cat enclosure – you'll have to pay for a ride in one of the park's game-viewing vehicles (prices start at R150 per person, depending on the duration of the game drive).

However, we like driving our own vehicle, and if you feel the same, unhitch your off-road trailer and leave it at your campsite. One self-drive route leads south from the camp to the Mahlindza waterhole, and the other self-drive route is the Tamboti road that takes you to the north of the park. At the Mahlindza waterhole, you may get out of your vehicle and take your camera to the bird hide to photograph birds and hippos. The Tamboti road takes you through a large vulture colony that congregate on the dry branches of hardwood trees. Some of these trees are reportedly a thousand years old and are partly responsible for the establishment of the park.

There are also many rhinos here, and we even had to race away from an aggressive bull that wanted to impale our vehicle with its horn! Poachers should also tread carefully, as armed rangers are regularly seen on patrol.

Your wildlife viewing has come to an end for now, and it's time to relax by a campfire. If you want to let your loved ones at home know you're safe, you can use the Wi-Fi at reception – it costs R50 for 500 MB of data.

The campsite at Ndlovu has no electricity or water, but you camp on grass under shade trees. The staff will light a lantern in the ablution block in the evening, and the showers use gas heaters. At night, you can hear the grunting of hippos in the waterhole barely 100 m from your tent. Don't worry, Hlane's campsite is enclosed – albeit by a thin wire fence – to keep them out…

On the third day of our journey through Eswatini, we drive through the central parts of the kingdom. As soon as we pass through the gate, we turn right onto the tarred MR3 and follow it all the way to the town of Manzini, about 70 km from Hlane.

During the 1970s, Manzini was inhabited by white South Africans, particularly engineers and their families, and the town's streets still bear the old names, such as Villiers Street, Martins Street, Louw Street, and Du Toit Street.

Follow Dr David Hynde Street through Manzini and eventually join the MR9 regional road – 17 km after reaching the MR9, turn right onto the D8 secondary road. The road sign is missing, but there is a large billboard for the Nkonyeni Lodge and Golf Estate. The road passes the estate, after which its name changes to the D14, and it becomes a dirt road.

This interesting dirt road takes you through steep passes in a mountainous landscape. We had to engage four-wheel drive at one point, so it is not suitable for regular sedans. On a striking plateau, we encountered a herd of Nguni cattle guarded by a Maluti dog, a breed similar to an Anatolian Shepherd but better suited to Eswatini's warmer climate. Shortly after, we passed a group of houses with a sign that reads: "Royal Kraal", perhaps one of King Mswati III's many cattle farms.

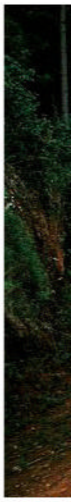
The dirt road eventually ends at the tarred MR4 regional road, where you turn right towards Mankayane (there is a road sign here). We now drive 38 km north to the town of Malkerns.

Malkerns is known for its candle factory, Swazi Candles, where you can buy interesting candles and soap as gifts for your loved ones at home or personal souvenirs. There is also an open-air market where you can purchase woven baskets and colorful fabrics at tourist prices. Swazi Candles is located on the outskirts of the town along the MR18 regional road and is open every day from 8:00 to 17:00.

Return to the town centre and follow the MR27 for 6 km north until you reach the MR103, then turn left at the signpost for Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary, Eswatini's oldest conservation area. Upon arrival at Mlilwane, you'll pay an entrance fee of R80 pp at the main gate. Here you'll find a memorial hall for King Sobhuza II, Mlilwane's first patron, as well as plaques acknowledging the Reilly family who transformed their Mlilwane farm into the wildlife sanctuary that would follow.

Now drive through a broad wetland where impalas, warthogs and zebras graze, and over a dam wall (the dam is full of crocodiles) to an avenue of trees behind which Mlilwane's reception lies. If you didn't use up all your Wi-Fi data at Hlane yesterday, you can finish it here, as it's the same network and password.

> The Tamboti road takes you through a large vulture colony that congregate on the dry branches of hardwood trees



I'M ON A PLAIN. The D14 gravel road leads you over broad plains atop mountains (above) and don't be shy to explore the forestry roads around Malkerns. One of these roads (below), for example, lead to the Engwenyameni Falls.

I also want to go!

Can I drive on my own? Yes, just be cautious of animals, especially cattle, roaming around.

How long is the route? The route we discuss here is 700 km long and takes about five days if you only stay one night at each location.

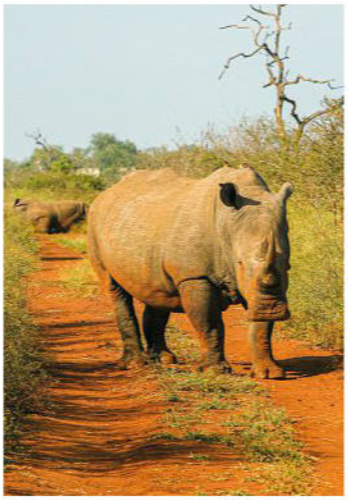
Is a 4x4 vehicle a must? Some dirt roads can be muddy if it has rained recently. Other roads are rocky, so we suggest driving a 4x4 vehicle.

How much fuel do I need? Petrol stations are plentiful, and petrol costs R3 per litre cheaper than in South Africa.

Can my dog come along? Unfortunately, pets are not allowed in the reserves.

What emergency equipment should I pack? The law requires a reflective vest and emergency triangle. A tyre-repair kit is always helpful.

Can I ride a motorcycle here? Indeed, you can. The reserves are reluctant to allow motorcycles, but they sometimes issue permits for large adventure motorcycles.



There's also a restaurant, swimming pool, shop and rondavels. However, we're heading to the campsite with its towering trees. The campsite has built-up braai areas and electricity. Every three stands share a tap and rubbish bin. The ablution block is impeccably clean with dishwashing and laundry facilities. Don't be alarmed if you hear rustling in the bushes late at night; it's just tame nyalas. In fact, they are so tame that a neighbour joked that he wished one would climb onto his grid to braai itself…

The last leg of our tour is only 100 km long, but it will take you all day. Leave Mlilwane the way you entered and turn left onto the MR103 regional road. Once you've turned, it's 1,6 km to the town of Lobamba, where a road sign directs you right to the national museum and the King Sobhuza II Memorial Park.

The memorial park consists of a hall displaying photographs of King Sobhuza II's life, as well as three of his official cars parked here: two Buicks and a Cadillac. The second building is a mausoleum where the king's remains were held in state for a time. The third structure is a dome under which a statue of the king stands. You may take photos of everything except the mausoleum – out of respect – although the Dlamini royal family's tomb is actually located in the Mbilaneni Mountains in southern Eswatini.

Across the road from the memorial park is the national museum, where you can learn all about the Swazi culture and history. More cars owned by Sobhuza II are displayed here, and inside a small hall are stuffed animals with glass eyes. It costs R150 per person to visit both the memorial park and museum.

Leave the museum and drive 1 km farther north on the MR103 until you reach a road sign for Matenga, then turn left. Follow the tar road to the entrance gate for the Matenga Kraal. Admission is R150 per person.

Two peaks called the Breasts of Sheba (King Solomon's love interest) tower

Useful siSwati phrases

Schooling is in English, so almost all Swazis older than seven can speak the language – in fact, we found that Swazis are keen to practice their English with you. However, it works in your favour if you can greet a police officer in their own language. We also found that Swazis like to greet with: "Hello, how are you?" and then it is expected of you to ask how they are doing as well.

Hello	**Sawubona**
How are you?	**Unjani**
Thank you	**Ngiyabonga**
Leave me alone!	**Ngiyekele!**
I don't understand	**Angiva**
Do you speak English?	**Uyasatiyini siNgisi?**

CHEERS! Mantenga cultural village hosts traditional dances, but if you missed it you can always go see the striking Mantenga Falls. End your afternoons with a cold Sibebe beer, named after the world's biggest granite rock.

SIBEBE
PREMIUM LAGER
SIBEBE
PREMIUM LAGER

MBULUZI GAME RESERVE

ROYAL HLANE NATIONAL PARK

Where we stayed

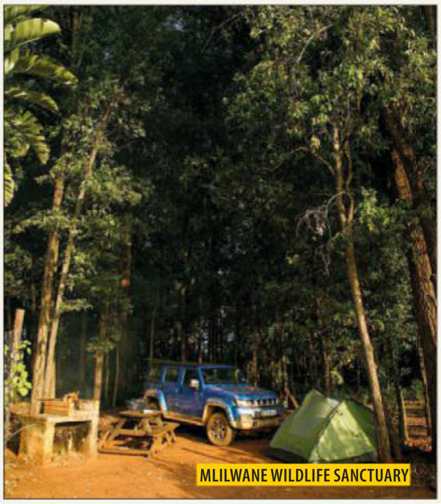
Forever Badplaas
Contact ☎ 017 844 8000
🖱 badplaas@foreversa.co.za
🖱 foreverbadplaas.co.za
Price R950 per rondavel

Mbuluzi Game Reserve
Contact ☎ +268 7625 9380
🖱 mbulzireception@gmail.com
🖱 mbuluzi.com
Price R150 per person for camping

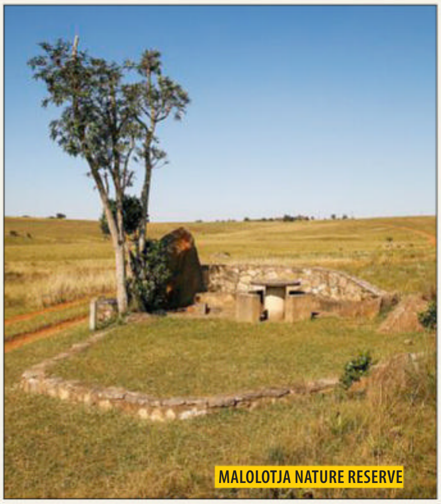
Royal Hlane National Park
Contact ☎ +268 2528 1000
🖱 reservations@biggameparks.org
🖱 biggameparks.org
Price R145 per person for camping and R80 entrance fee

Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary
Contact ☎ +268 2528 1000
🖱 reservations@biggameparks.org
🖱 biggameparks.org
Price R145 per person for camping and R80 entrance fee

Malolotja Nature Reserve
Contact ☎ +268 2444 3241
🖱 culturalvillage@sntc.org.sz
🖱 eswatininaturereserves.com
Price R570 per self-catering unit



MLILWANE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



MALOLOTJA NATURE RESERVE

above the traditional kraal. The 'breast' directly above the kraal is also known as Executioner's Rock, as people suspected of witchcraft were thrown from it in the kingdom's past.

Colourful traditional dance routines called the *sibhaca* take place every day at 11:15 in the kraal, and buses full of tourists arrive punctually for this event. However, if this isn't your cup of tea, you can follow the road along the Lusushwana River further into the Myonyane Mountains to the striking Mantenga Falls. The waterfall is the largest of its kind in Eswatini, and there is a lovely picnic spot near the bottom – just watch out for baboons and vervet monkeys trying to steal your sandwiches.

We return to the MR103 and follow it to the MR3 highway – a wide and fast tar road – to Eswatini's capital, Mbabane. Take the main street, Mahlokohla Street, into the city centre and then follow Gwamile Street to the outskirts of Mbabane.

A mere 8 km outside the city centre is Sibebe Rock, the world's largest granite dome at 1 488 m high and with an area of 165 km^2. Only Australia's Uluru Rock is larger, but it's made of sandstone. Eswatini's local beer, Sibebe Lager, is named after the rock. There's a spot to pull over beneath Sibebe Rock at the coordinates S26.25847 E31.16747.

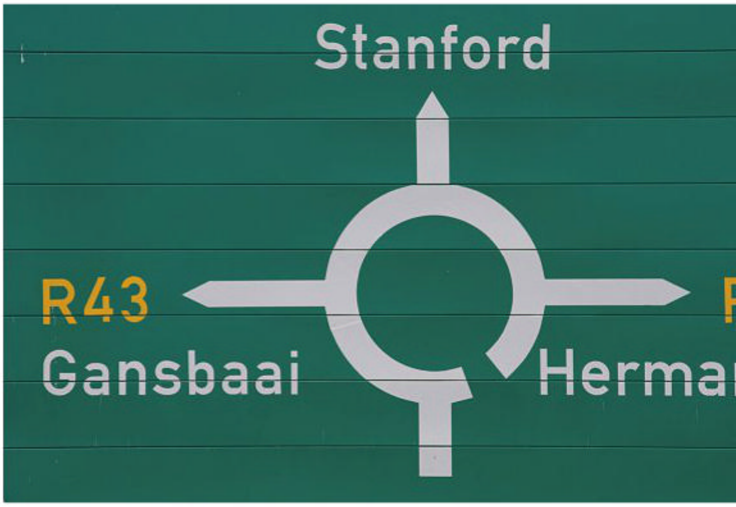
Now head back to Mbabane and follow the MR3 to the turnoff for Piggs Peak, Motjane, and Sigangeni, this is where you leave the highway. Drive through a subway under the MR3 in the direction of Sigagani and immediately turn left towards Motjane West. This road takes you to Ngwenya and specifically Ngwenya Glass. This glass factory produces beautiful drinking glasses and vases. Next to the factory is Ngwenya Glass's own shop, a restaurant, a chocolate shop, a gin dealer and a craft market.

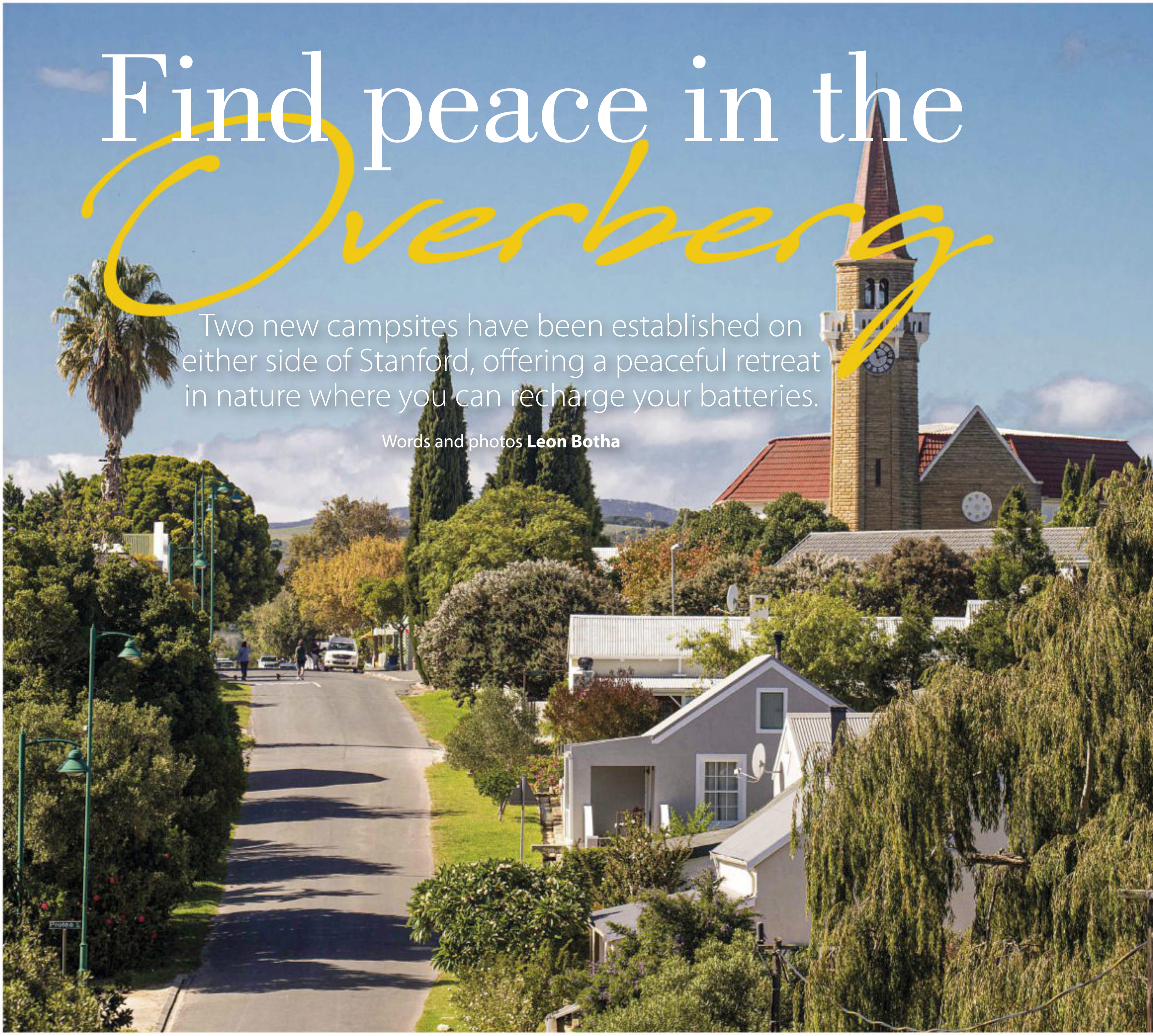
After buying souvenirs and enjoying a meal at the restaurant, it's time to head to your last overnight spot on this route. Take the MR3 back in the direction of Mbabane, but take the very first turnoff onto the MR1 regional road. Its road sign directs you to Piggs Peak – 18 km after turning off the MR3, you'll arrive at the main gate for the Malolotja Nature Reserve, our last overnight spot on our tour through Eswatini.

Malolotja is a hiker's paradise – with more than 300 km of hiking trails – and there isn't much provision for private vehicles. You may drive to the campsite and lodge, and that's it. However, it is a captivating place with rolling hills and a seemingly endless grassland. At the lodge, there is a series of self-catering chalets and a restaurant with a bar. The campsite is 300 metres from the lodge, and the sites are beautiful. The ablution block does need attention, and if it weren't for a broken toilet on the men's side – the women's toilets all work – and the torn shower curtains, we might have considered it perhaps the best campsite on this tour.

Tonight, you sit by a campfire and reminisce about the friendly and engaging people of Eswatini. There are no conflicts between ethnic groups, no load shedding, and no rampant crime here. Make a plan and visit our friendly neighbour; you won't regret it.

ARTIST **CHRIS WOOLF** PLACE **STANFORD KITCHEN**

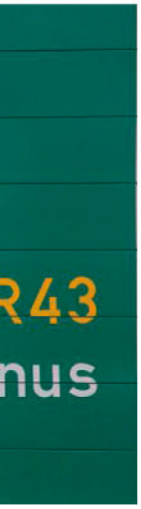


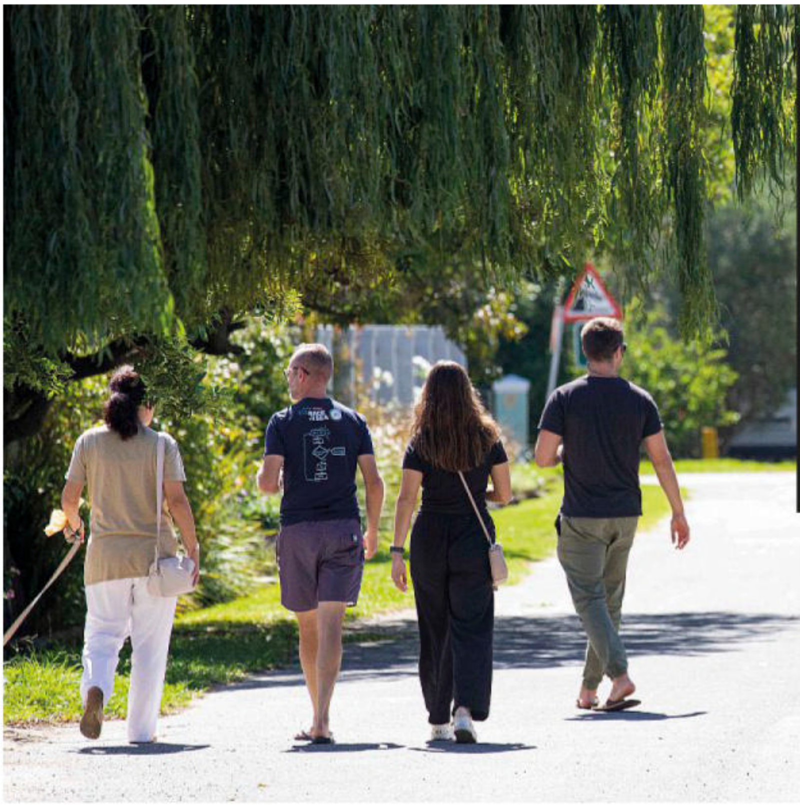


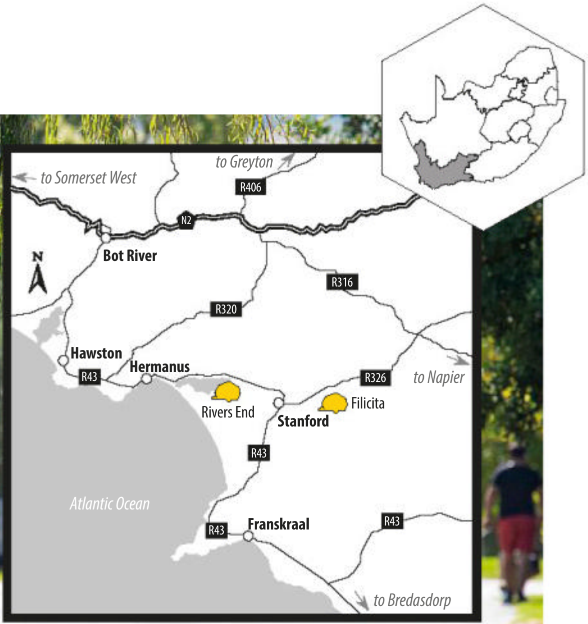
Find peace in the Overberg

Two new campsites have been established on either side of Stanford, offering a peaceful retreat in nature where you can recharge your batteries.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**






to Somerset West
to Greyton
R406
N2
Bot River
N
R316
R320
Hawston
R43
Hermanus
R326
to Napier
Rivers End
Stanford
Filicita
R43
Atlantic Ocean
R43
Franskraal
R43
to Bredasdorp

Bienvenido
wamkelekile
o amogetswe
herzlich willkommen
miamukeriwile
sondzela
Huānying
Velkommen
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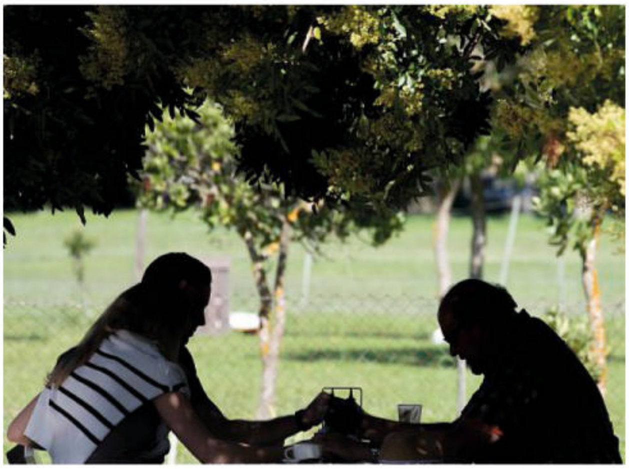


Camping in nature will always be the best antidote against life's relentless hustle. For some, the absence of busy water slides, the lack of queues at food stalls, and the solitude of not having anyone pitching their tent next to you feels almost heavenly. The serenity of the day embraces you as you open the door of your caravan or unzip your tent. Pure bliss.

Stanford is a destination that fits this description perfectly. It charms visitors who prefer tranquillity over more bustling destinations, such as nearby Hermanus.

On the Hermanus side of Stanford you can stop just 6 km from the town at the Rivers End Farm where you can set up a camp chair by the peaceful Kleinrivier lagoon. Alternatively, you might choose to drive 10 km inland to relax at the Filicita Country Lodge, where you can unwind next to a charming dam surrounded by a delightful natural garden.

That's our first destination.

FELICITA COUNTRY LODGE

Seeing the forest and the trees

At Filicita, you camp beside and beneath remarkable milkwood trees. Nature has provided a lovely campsite, but you must first get there.

Just over 4 km outside the village, you turn off onto a wide dirt road, and 3,4 km later, you turn right again onto a smaller dirt road. A third turn is a mere 450 m along where a farm gate awaits. There's a sign with an arrow pointing towards the gate – cast your eye onto the horizon to see the Kleinrivier mountain range stretch toward Hermanus. There are two low walls on either side of the entrance, making the gate appear narrower than it is. But, fortunately, the narrowest point of the gate is precisely 3 m, which means you can get through with any caravan.

You are now on a twin-track, and it's best to keep your towing vehicle nicely in your tracks, especially a little later on. The twin-track goes over a hill through a wattle grove and then a blue-gum thicket. This is where you need to be alert with a front-wheel-drive vehicle that is towing something. The road turns sandy, and you must maintain momentum to avoid getting stuck. We got through with the new Mahindra XUV700 and an Invader Duo X – so it can be done. It's also here that cellphone signals fail you, but luckily the entire road is only 1,5 km to the gate that leads into the campsite.

On our arrival, Jonas Makathi, the camp manager, greets us in his red T-shirt and directs us to descend the hill and stop on the lawn 70 metres ahead. The wall of milkwood trees conceals a dam behind it, and the lawn is a lovely spot to set up camp. Visitors are allowed to swim in the dam, but if you catch any black bass, they must be returned to the water.

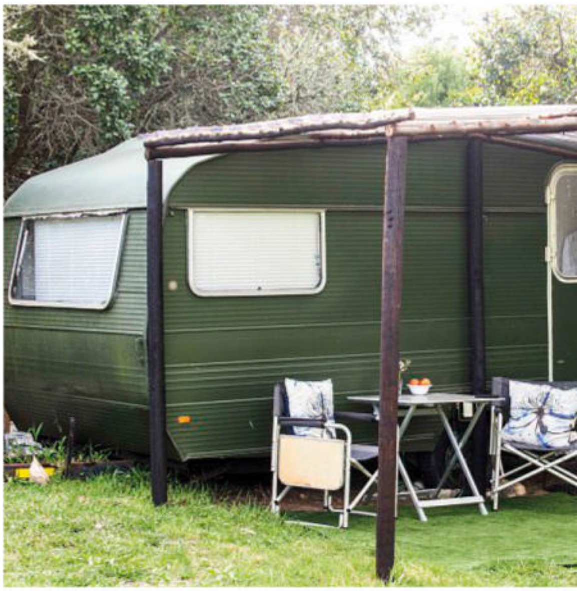
The farthest point of the water features an open patch of grass with a slight incline, making it suitable for pitching several tents. To get there, you have to drive over the dam wall, which is wide enough for a vehicle but the nearby trees will stop a tall caravan from passing.

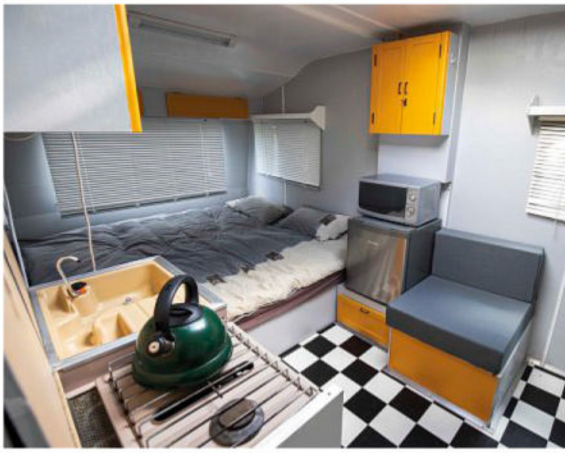
However, a smaller off-road trailer will make it. The nearest power point, with an ordinary domestic socket, is about 30 metres away under the milkwood trees, and the lawn is open without shade trees.

On the other side, visitors can also camp. To do so, drive past the initial lawn, and then the path turns sharply to the left. The sand is quite loose in the first bend, so drive through it at a good speed. Fortunately, Jonas is available to assist in his old Land Rover Discovery, sporting a "TD1" badge.

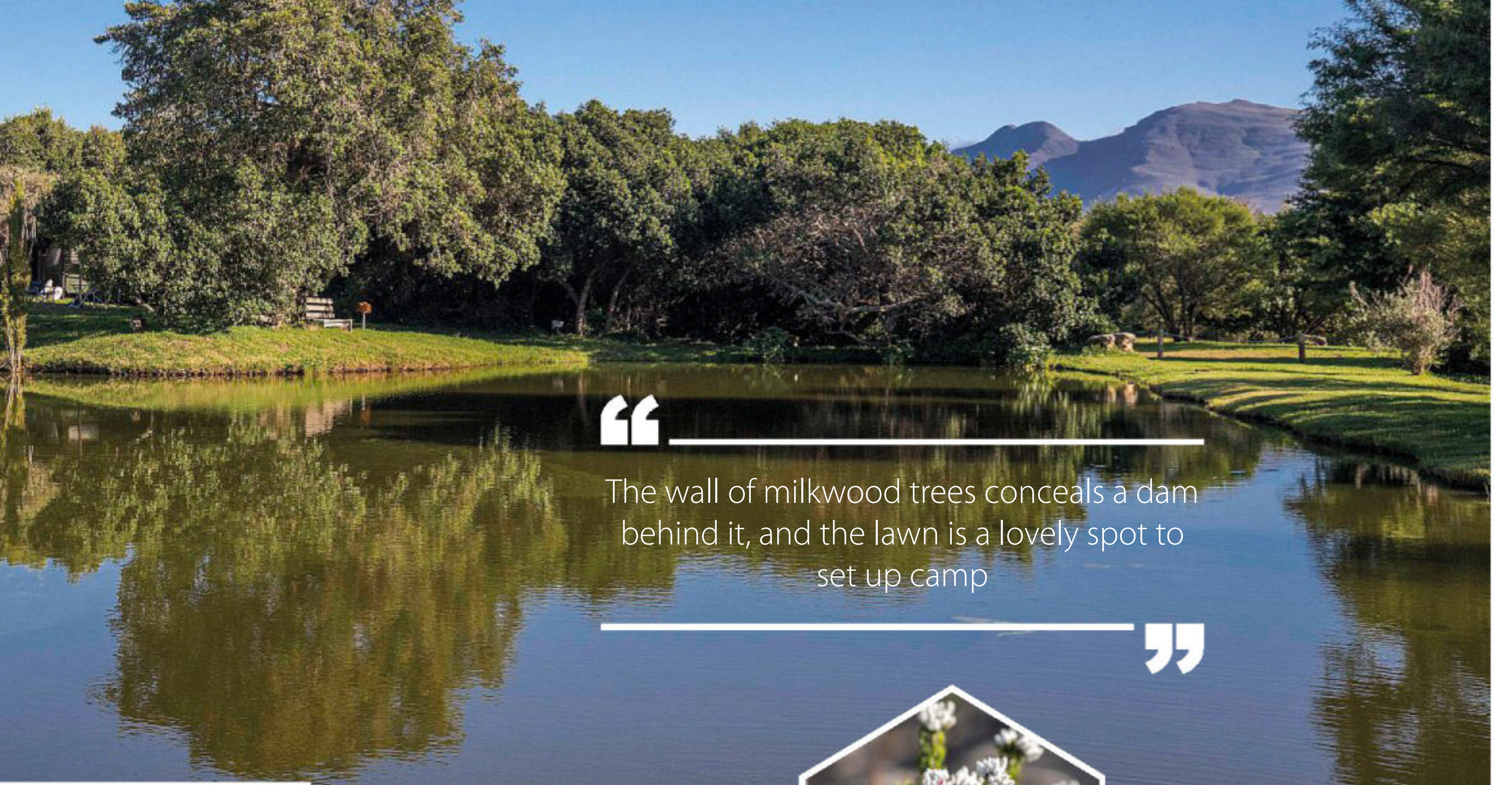
This side of the dam offers enough grass for up to two larger caravans, and an old green-painted caravan is also available for booking. Although all its markings have been painted over, it likely dates back to the early 1980s. The resort staff refer to it as the Varacan, and it's quite handy if you want to invite friends who don't have their camping gear as you can set up right next to it. However, this side of the dam has no power points, except for those in the Varacan.

The Varacan's interior has been nicely spruced up with a chequered floor, microwave oven, small fridge, gas stove, crockery, and an open wardrobe. A transparent fibreglass awning has been installed at the front with a green groundsheet that resembles grass. In front of the door is an old steel step that appears to be part of the caravan's original equipment. Behind the caravan, there is a private outdoor shower, with gravel on the ground and a showerhead in the branches. It's perfect for the summer as it offers cold water.





CAMP & DRIVE. The Varacan (above) is great for non-caravanning friends. Ostriches (opposite middle) can run continuously at speeds of 48-59 km/h and sprint up to 69 km/h, fast enough to keep up with Jonas' Discovery.



> The wall of milkwood trees conceals a dam behind it, and the lawn is a lovely spot to set up camp

Opposite the Varacan, right by the water, there's a tree that gives reasonable shade with a bench underneath. Here, you can relax and look out over the dam.

FILICITA'S UNIQUE FEATURE lies hidden in the forest between the two camps. The two wooden doors you see on the right edge of the forest are the two showers. The lower part of the structure is covered with roof sheeting and the top is rounded off with wood.

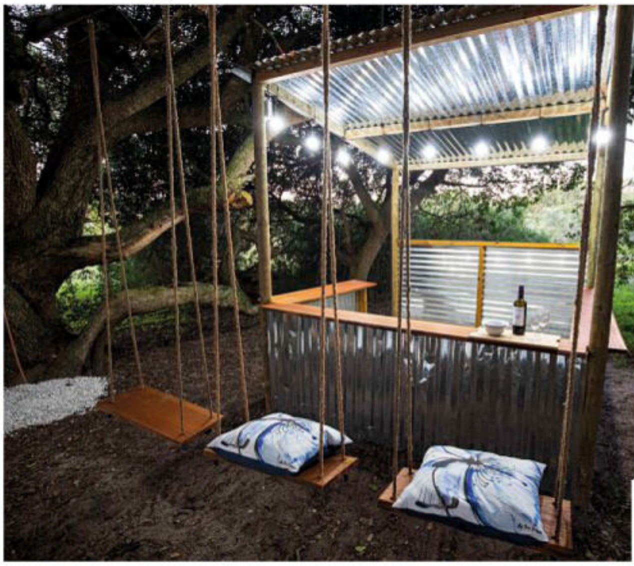
The two showers are identical, but the one on the right is partially open towards the forest – so here you shower, as it were, in nature. Even if both showers are used simultaneously, the water pressure remains strong enough – and there's plenty of hot water for everyone thanks to a gas geyser. You stand on a few concrete blocks on the floor with gravel around. The ground is sandy, and the water drains away quickly.

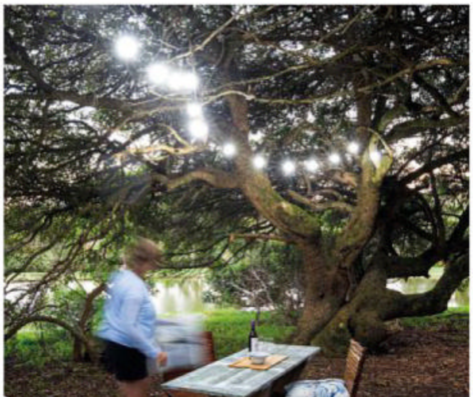
At the back of the showers is a sort of wendy house with two toilets, and outside the room there's a sink with a cold tap for the dishes.

From here, there's an enormous stretch extending beneath the milkwood trees. The ground has been cleared, and this is where you'll find a second zinc structure. This one is in the shape of a bar with a counter and three swings in front of it where you can sit. A bar with swings may not always be a good idea, but you can also use the worktop as a serving place if you come to socialise under the leafy canopy.

A pole with a switch is roughly in the middle of the open space. From this pole, an electric cord with light bulbs runs diagonally through the branches – it looks almost like a string of pearls when you turn it on. There are also lights in the 'bar', and behind the counter is a power point (also USB points). The switch for the garden lights also turns on the light in the shower. And you won't struggle with the power supply, as Filicita uses solar power and gas.

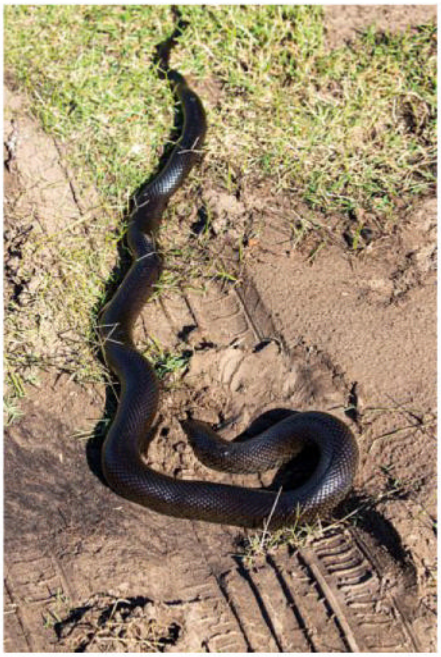
There is the odd wooden bench and table, but nothing stops you from bringing your camp chairs closer for a gathering around the fire pit – it has a loose grid.





SWING AND SWIG. A bar with swings for seats (top left) is either the best idea ever or the worst. Take time out to relax next to the dam and you might see fork-tailed drongos diving for fish.

INVADER
DUO X
797CY
INVADER
Off-Road Campers
5



TAKE A SHORT WALK along the entrance road and see if you can recognise some of the plant life. We're no experts, but with the help of a phone app, we were able to identify the Erica versicolor shrub – as well as the tall conebush, yellow trailing pincushion, pretty dogface and lichen that densely cover the trees.

There's no shortage of wildlife, and we're not talking about Queenie the tame ostrich that wanders around here. Also, be on the lookout for mole snakes. We encountered a whopper of a mole snake in the tyre track of our vehicle in the sand. That might explain all the molehills… If you sit quietly, you can watch some of these molehills grow as they are mined.

Unfortunately, we happened to visit just as the horsefly season was starting. These pests are even more annoying than mosquitoes. Apparently, it's only the females that bite, but they virtually tear through your skin, and you easily end up with a bloodstain. Insect repellent is therefore a must.

If you sit quietly for a while on the wooden bench by the dam, you might be lucky enough to see fork-tailed drongos, like kamikazes, dive down onto the water with a big splash and then fly out again onto the nearest branch, shaking their feathers.

It's nearly half-past four in the afternoon, and we've long been reclining in our camping chairs. As the sun sets, we hear a blood-curdling roar. Yes, there are lions, but they're on the neighbour's farm about 400 meters away. The first night, the fellows had an ongoing conversation, but the second night was quieter.

Briefly | Felicita Country Lodge

Campsite A lawn surrounding a smallish dam where you can set up camp wherever you fancy. There's room for a maximum of 15 campers, but if you book, the place is only yours. You're allowed to swim in the dam, and there's a small 'zink dam' for the little ones. Cellphone signal varies.

Ablution facilities Almost Spartan, but good enough to return. One of the two showers is partially open to nature.

Price R300 pppn and R700 pppn for the Varacan.

Arrival and departure No fixed times.

Contact ☎ 084 594 9999 🖱 felicita.co.za

Nearest town Stanford, 9,8 km.

Road conditions There's 5,4 km of good dirt road, but the last 1,5 km of it is somewhat sandy.

GPS S34.447376 E19.531454

***Drive & Camp* says** Filicita's campsite is brand new. The name refers to the Roman goddess Fausta Felicita. "Filicita" apparently means "happiness, a state of divinely inspired blessing and bliss".

RIVERS END
NO FIRES
RIVERS END
BEWARE OF SNAKES

WITH OR WITHOUT. At Rivers End you can choose to wild camp with zero facilities or you can park your caravan near the ablution facilities where you'll also have access to electricity.

RIVERS END FARM

Down to earth

Rivers End has many elements in common with Filicita, but the camping experience differs. Rivers End is more open and has more room for different campers.

To get there, you need to drive back to Stanford and pass through the village, out the other side, which is when the road turns into a dirt road (they are preparing the road to be tarred soon).

The you will only have a kilometre or two of dirt road left to reach Rivers End, but overall, the road isn't too bad – it's just a bit corrugated in places.

The gate is a mere 6,4 km outside Stanford. As you leave the village, the Klein River meanders alongside you in the direction of Hermanus until it starts to dam up in the Klein River Lagoon. Rivers End is right here – hence the name – and you turn right. Then you have another 400 m or so to go before you reach the main camp. It feels as if the Kleinrivier Mountain is now on your doorstep, looming behind the water.

The entrance doesn't have a gate, but it is signposted. Opposite the entrance is a smaller entrance with a road leading towards a ridge. This area is also part of Rivers End's land, and a few spots have been cleared among the fynbos for you to set up camp. However, there are no facilities here, and you must be 100% self-sufficient. (There are therefore no power points.) By the way, Rivers End has its own power supply – the dreaded "load shedding" does not get mentioned here.

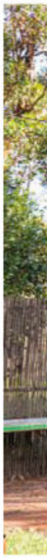
Just before you drive down to the main camp, notice the row of blue gum trees about 300 m ahead of you. A group of stands, Blue Gums, is laid out under these trees, with a few more, Wetlands, on the other side of them. Then follows the largest campsite, farther to the right: Guinea Fowl, also past the trees.

Between the entrance and the blue gum trees, Corner Camp is to the left, similar to the camping spots near the ridge. There are no facilities here either, but you are closer to the bathrooms (about 350 m away).

THE BATHROOMS ARE ON the righthand end of the blue gum trees, which means they are also the closest to the camping spots under the blue gums.

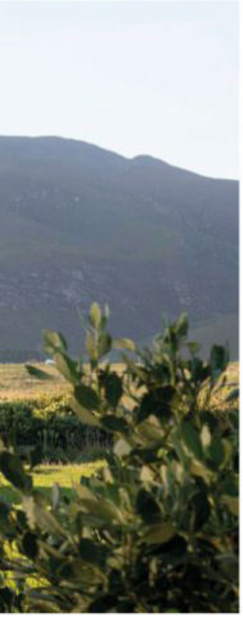
This is a neat brick building with four private bathrooms – one at each corner, with an outdoor sink for dishes on each side. Your bathroom has an open shower with a round ceramic basin next to it on top of a tiled countertop, a large mirror behind it, and a toilet. A gas geyser provides hot water.

There are four stands at Blue Gums – the first one is under the trees farthest to the left as you initially saw when driving in, and the rest follow in a row. As with the rest of the stands, you set up camp on a cleared piece of ground, but here there is also a cord in the branches with light bulbs attached. So, you're not



RIVERS END
Where life begins
GUINEA FOWL

INTO THE WILD. The Black Eagle Bus (left) is another accommodation option if you don't feel like sleeping in a tent. Guinea Fowl (bottom) may be the second-best campsite considering how far it is from the bathrooms, but the massive lawn is great.



RIVERS END
Where life begins
BLACK EAGLE BUS
←
ABLUSION BLOCK
→

includes a grid. You have an unbeatable view of the water where dozens of coots float around and bark hoarsely at each other with their characteristic call.

Both Wetland stands are spacious enough for the largest caravans with a tent. It's also where we saw what looked like lawyer's wig mushrooms growing.

Guinea Fowl is perhaps the second-best campsite considering how far it is from the bathrooms, but you have a massive grass carpet that is unparalleled. On this 35 x 25 m stand, you can pitch camp wherever you want, but the power point is in the corner closest to the bathrooms. In the same corner is also a shade net, which compensates for the lack of shady trees. In front of you, on the water's side, are tall shrubs, but there are open spots here in complete darkness as with the other camping spots. We saw a power point (a regular domestic socket, like the rest) near the first camping spot, and another one roughly in the middle of the row of stands.

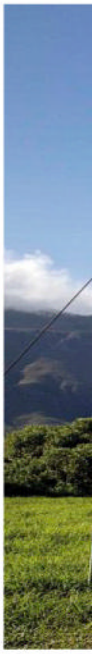
Here, too, are the portable braais that Wetlands has, and you can move them to wherever is convenient for you for the evening's braai.

If you want to set up camp near the water, choose between the two stands at Wetlands. Turn left before the blue gum trees, and the road curves back to the right toward the water. You are now about 200 m from the bathrooms. The stands are reasonably level with grass, and there is about 20 m between the two with fynbos in-between. That's where you'll find the power point and tap of the one farthest from the bathroom is located. So make sure you've packed your extension cord.

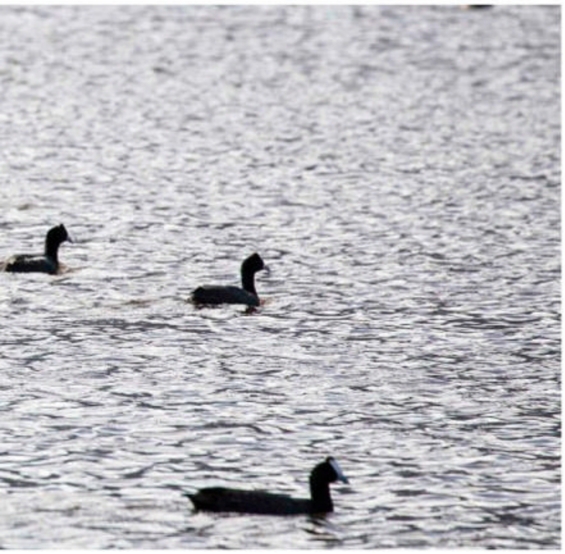
The stand next to this one has a shade tree that provides a good screen from the morning sun, and the power point is also closer. There's a portable braai that

> If you want to set up camp near the water, choose between the two stands at Wetlands

TAKE FLIGHT. The birdlife is just one of many attractions at Rivers End and the horseflies don't detract too much from the beautiful scenery.



RIVERS END
Where life begins
BLUEGUMS 1-4
BLACK EAGLE BUS
ABLUSION BLOCK
GUINEA FOWL
MAIN CABIN
SIMBA&RACHEL'S HOUSE



and there where you can look out over the water.

Other accommodation is also available: there's a large wooden chalet next to Guinea Fowl, and a converted bus between Guinea Fowl and Wetlands… but Rivers End is also home to other creatures.

At the camping spots across the road, a sign warns of snakes and ticks – we saw a mole snake near the bathrooms again. And one that looked like a skaapsteker which hastily crossed the road.

The horseflies were also present, but it's a small price to pay for the privilege of sitting next to one of the most beautiful natural scenes in the country.

Briefly | Rivers End Farm

Campsite Stands with various options: from secluded and self-sufficient, under blue gum trees with power and light, next to the water with power, or a campsite with lush green grass, also with power.
Ablution facilities Four neat and private bathrooms for everyone's use.
Price Depending on the season, R250 or R300 pppn.
Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00 (negotiable).
Contact ☎ 082 550 3702 or 082 775 0410 🖱 johannesfruits@gmail.com 🖱 riversendfarmstanford.com
Nearest town Stanford, 6,4 km.
Road conditions The last 6,4 km to the gate is a gravel road with some corrugated sections, but a large section of it will be tarred soon, then there will be only about 1,5 km of gravel road.
GPS S34.430801 E19.386791

***Drive & Camp* says** There is no reception or office, but Simbarashe Sibanda will welcome you at the campsite. ●

Time travel in your tent

Unwind at a cosy campsite on the banks of the Klip River, a mere stone's throw from the point where three provinces meet. Then explore the rich history and stunning landscapes of this region.

Words and photos **Helenus Kruger**

The Eastern Free State boasts captivating landscapes. Rolling green hills in the summer transform into a warm golden hue during winter, reminiscent of Tim Burton's films with their bare willow branches. This part of the Free State can even experience snowfall.

Approximately 40 km east of Vrede, André and Ansie Podges' Oppi Rooiplaas campsite nestles between the Klip River and a rocky hill. The Klip River forms the border between the Free State and Mpumalanga, and although the campsite is in Mpumalanga, the looks of its southern tip is pure Eastern Free State.

If you're looking for a small, intimate getaway with no cellphone signal (there is spotty reception available about 800 m from the camp), Oppi Rooidam is the spot for you. Ansie never takes bookings for more than 20 people, and at most, four caravans. She will allow people who don't know one another book at the same time, but ideally, friends or family should book out the entire camp. Even a single family can reserve the whole place. You're far from any town lights, and on a moonless night, it's pitch dark. The Milky Way and stars shine brightly overhead.

The campsite has three terraces – two for pitching tents and one right by the river for starting the day with morning coffee and rusks. The tranquillity is almost tangible.

The terraces are wide enough for your caravan and awning, and slope gently toward the river. Beneath your

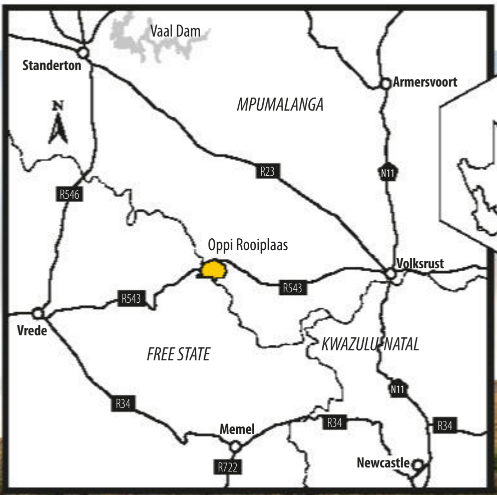
feet is a carpet of kikuyu grass, but unfortunately, there are no shade trees.

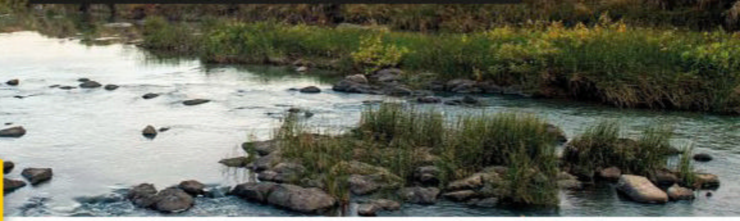
There's also no electricity, so you'll need to pack your solar panels and battery system. Near the entrance are two solar-powered lights on poles illuminating the camp – they're not too bright and won't bother anyone. The camp features two taps, large braai drums with grids, and rubbish bins at the dishwashing area.

When the summer sun starts blazing, you can settle into the boma with its stone benches and centre braai area. It's next to the river, and a willow tree provides shade from midday onwards. There's another solar-powered light here.

The ablution block is on the side of the camp, close to the entrance. There are two bathrooms – Windpomp and Trekker – each with a shower in a zinc enclosure, a stone soap dish, a basin, mirror, hooks, a stone bench and a loo. A gas geyser heats the water, and a solar-powered LED provides illumination.

The dishwashing area is at the front of the building, under a roof and paved – it's large enough to double as a kitchen. Just bring your table. There's also a round pub-style table and chairs made from tree stumps. The area is lit by a solar-powered light with a motion sensor.





SILENCE. After a day searching for graves, monuments and battlegrounds, it's time to return to camp on the banks of the Klip River.

MAJUBA
1881

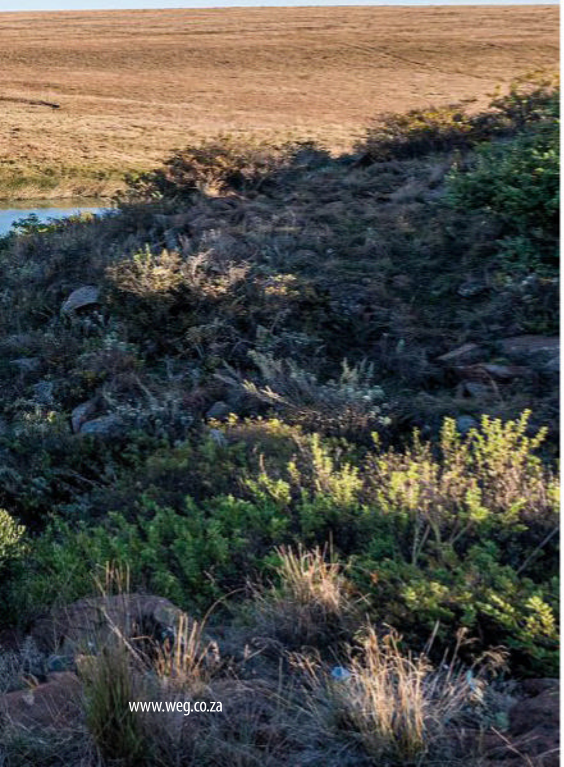
Each morning around 09:00, Busi Tsotetsi cleans the bathrooms, dishwashing area, and your braai grid. For just R30, she'll also wash your dishes.

Pack your mountain bikes, hiking boots, fishing gear, binoculars and bird books. Or grab an tube and life jacket – available for free – and hit the river. You can even bring Felix along, just make sure to arrange with Ansie beforehand.

For those who prefer a more rustic camping experience, there are five bush camps further upstream where you'll need to be completely self-sufficient. There's also a permanent caravan that sleeps four. The caravan is fully equipped; just bring your own bedding.

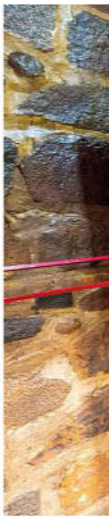
Depending on which direction you're coming from, Vrede or Volksrust are the last places to stock up on supplies. However, you can purchase wood (R30) and ice (R20) from Ansie.

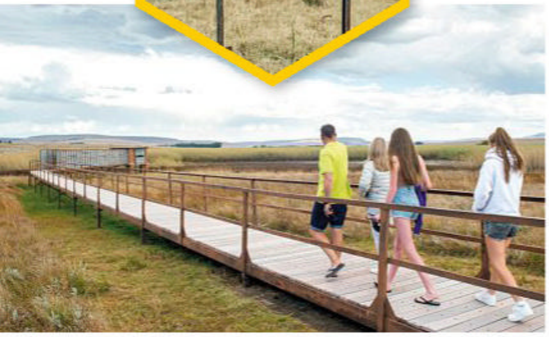
Restless adventurers have plenty of dirt roads through beautiful landscapes, past farms with maize and soybean fields, a wetland, a charming old hotel, and a generous dose of war history to explore. Pack a picnic basket, fill up the coffee flask and hit the road.



OPPI ROOIPLAAS
2km

> Rolling green hills in the summer transform into a warm golden hue during winter…





SLACK PACK. Seekoeivlei has three bird hides and visiting these can easily take up a day in itself. Pack lunch and braai at the campsite.

Your first stop is the final resting place of Commandant-General Piet Joubert and his wife Hendrina in the family cemetery on Rustfontein farm (S27.37274 E29.60938), about 9 km from Oppi Rooiplaas on the R543. Follow the path from Rustfontein's gate until you find the cemetery 3 km farther on your right (S27.34784 E29.61149).

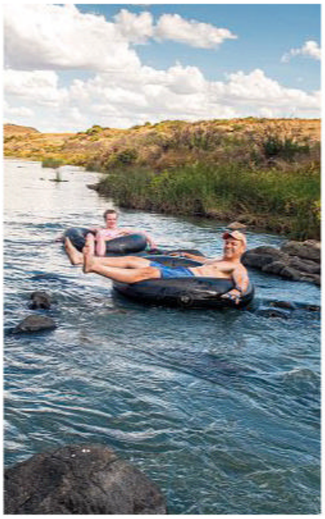
Joubert was the deputy president of the ZAR and commander of the Boer forces during the First Anglo-Boer War and the beginning of the Second Anglo-Boer War. He passed away on 27 March 1900 in Pretoria, and the tomb, built with stone blocks that fit together like a puzzle, was erected in 1904.

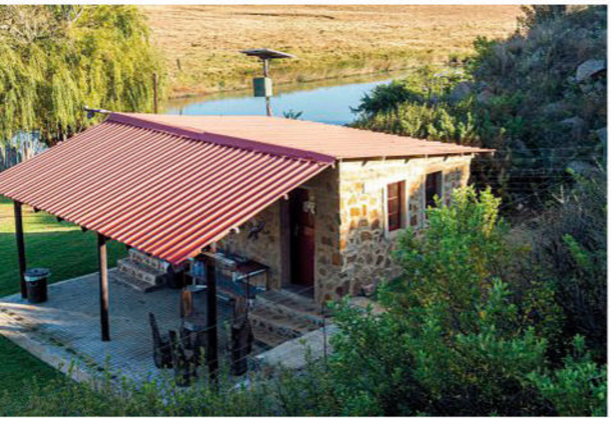
Drive back to the R543, turn left towards Volksrust, and after about 9 km, you'll reach Allemansnek (S27.38720 E29.69817). Before heading to Volksrust, turn right onto the Memel dirt road and drive 1,6 km to the memorial (S27.39974 E29.69202) in remembrance of the 15 Boer warriors who lost their lives in the Battle of Allemansnek. In this battle, General Redvers Buller's British forces broke through the Boer lines on 11 June 1900 and occupied the towns of Volksrust and Charlestown.

Retrace your steps and take the road to Volksrust, get onto the N11 toward Newcastle, and make a quick stop for biltong at Snowy Biltong along the N11 in Charlestown (S27.40547 E29.87499).

From here, continue in the direction of Newcastle. After 4,5 km, turn right at the Kwaggasnek sign (S27.44320 E29.86397) and drive 4 km uphill on the dirt road to Majuba Hill. It was here that the Boers climbed Majuba Hill on 27 February 1881, and defeated the British forces. The Majuba site (S27.46629 E29.83955) was closed during our visit, but check the website majubaberg.co.za to see what activities they offer.

From here, the road takes you to the Seekoeivlei Nature Reserve, 34 km along. But first, stop at the memorial (S27.479928 E29.828640), about 2 km away, which was erected in memory of Fannie Knight and G Roets who were murdered by the farmer Stephanus Swart on 6 May 1927, while he was





CALM. Oppi Rooiplaas' campsite may be small and basic, but that doesn't mean have to do without a hot shower. The water of the Klip River that flows past here is on its way to Seekoeivlei.

Briefly | Oppi Rooiplaas

Campsite An open area with no demarcated stands, and space for four caravans. There is grass but no shade.
Ablution facilities One ablution building with two bathrooms.
Price Main Camp: R100 per person per night (R50 for children under 12 years). Bush Camp: R75 pppn (R50 for under 12s). Caravan: R150 pppn (R75 for under 12s). Day visitors pay R50 pp per day.
Contact ☎ 082 227 4195
ansie.podges@yahoo.com
oppirooiplaas.com
Arrival and departure No specific times.
Nearest city Johannesburg, 250 km.
Road condition From Gauteng, it's highway, then a secondary tar road to Vrede, after which it's 40 km of dirt road to the camp.
GPS S27 361418 E29.520983 (farm gate); S27.371718 E29.509023 (campsite)

***Drive & Camp* says** The R543 dirt road is not suitable for regular caravans – and if you drive a low sedan, you'll have to take it slow.

fleeing from the police. The *Johannesburg Star* reported at the time that Swart was a rough character who frequently clashed with the law. After shooting eight people dead and wounding three others, Swart took his own life.

Majuba lies behind you as you continue – there are many spots where you can enjoy beautiful views of this historic mountain.

The wetlands of Seekoeivlei Nature Reserve (S27.60452 E29.60661), just north of Memel, are well worth a visit. This area is believed to be the habitat for a quarter of the Free State's endangered species. The wetland is also the breeding ground for the whiskered tern, blue crane, crowned crane, and the endangered wattled crane. This is where the Klip River begins – the same river that flows past your Oppi Rooiplaas campsite.

There are bird hides and roads where you're allowed to drive, but do first check in at the office. During the rainy season, some of the roads near the hides can be muddy, and getting stuck is a possibility.

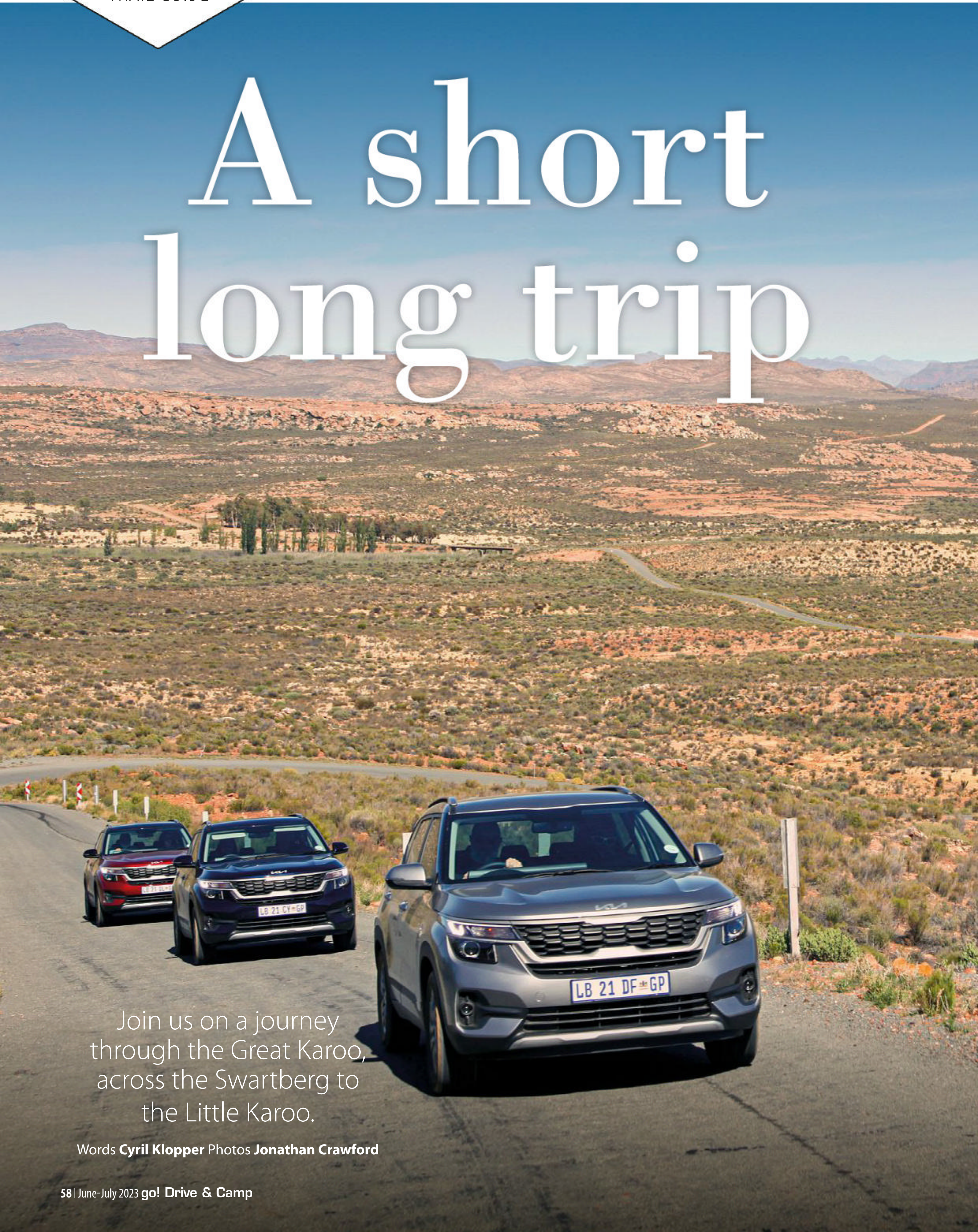
During our visit, there were no maps or information brochures available, and the card machine struggled to get a signal. So, bring cash with you. Entrance is R40 per person (including children), and the hours are from 07:00 to 16:00.

The final stop of the day is at the 109-year-old Memel Hotel, where a cold beer or a long pink gin and a pub meal await. (There are non-alcoholic refreshments too for designated drivers.)

From Memel, turn west at the intersection of Voortrekker and Eeufees Street (at the Volksrust sign; S27.679370 E29.566028) and take the dirt road that runs west of Seekoeivlei.

You have two right turns on this road: the first is 24 km outside the town (S27.49878 E29.45040), and then again 14 km later to return to the R543 (S27.38351 E29.42765). Now it's just 15 km to the camp.

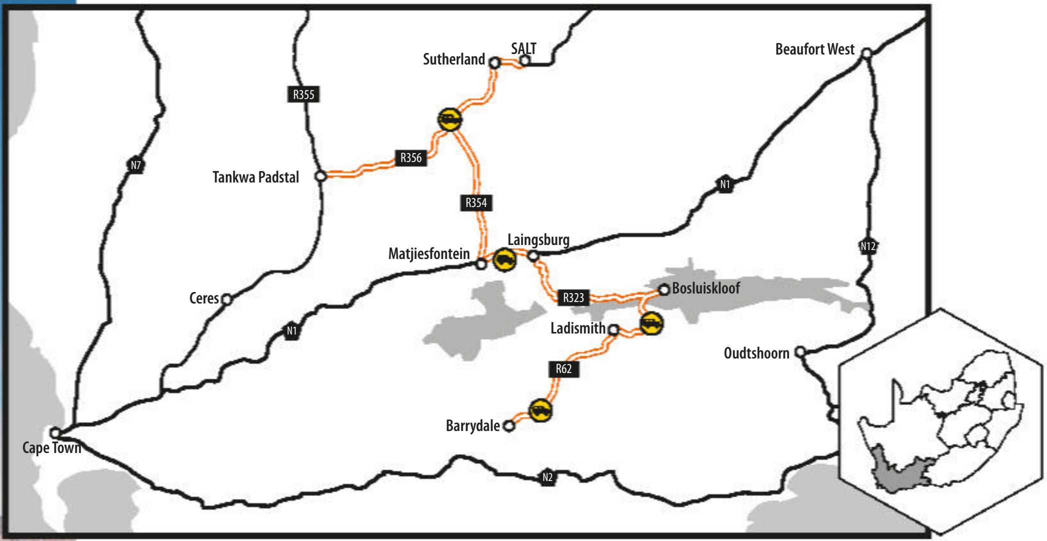
This 180 km circular route can easily take you eight hours, especially if you make numerous stops and spend time at Seekoeivlei. But you're here for the weekend – take it easy and enjoy the natural beauty and history lessons. You don't need a 4x4 vehicle, as long as yours has high ground clearance. ●



A short long trip

Join us on a journey through the Great Karoo, across the Swartberg to the Little Karoo.

Words **Cyril Klopper** Photos **Jonathan Crawford**



Our route begins at the Tankwa Padstal on the R355 gravel road between Ceres and Calvinia. It took you three hours to travel from Cape Town to here, and by this time, you're probably starving. Fortunately, the establishment serves delicious meals, and we recommend considering the roosterkoek burgers with chips – the UFO burger (R160) we had was quite good.

Now take the gravel road that runs behind the farm stall in the direction of Sutherland. It's a road that's less used, so do first inquire at the farm stall whether it's currently passable. During our visit, it had been damaged by heavy rain, but our convoy of Kia Seltos SUVs managed to get through, albeit with some difficulty here and there.

After 19 km, we join the well-maintained R356 dirt road, which takes us 60 km along to the tarred R354 and Verlatenkloof Pass. Our next stop is the South African Large Telescope (SALT) and observatory outside the town of Sutherland, where we take a guided tour to the telescopes. Remember to book ahead for the tour. Visit their website at 🖱 tours.saao.ac.za or call ☎ 023 570 2436. It costs R100 per adult, half-price for children under 12, and free entry for little ones under five. Tours take place between 10:30 and 14:30 from Mondays to Saturdays. Night tours are also available on request.

As the day draws to a close, there are several guesthouses in the town and a campsite to consider. Our convoy headed for the Rogge Cloof Guest Farm south of Sutherland along the R354. Accommodation ranges from self-catering units to luxury suites, with prices starting at R1 100 per room per night and going up to R4 600 for an entire house sleeping eight. The guest farm recently planted vineyards and plans to make their own wine, and the restaurant serves excellent dishes. The following day, we continue south on the R354 to the pretty town of Matjiesfontein. Here we enjoy a cup of coffee at the Lord Milner Hotel and visit the transport museum with its vintage cars, a genuine Penny Farthing bicycle, and even a set of train carriages.

What you need to know

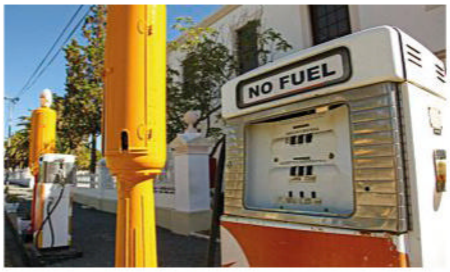
Maximum number of vehicles? It's a public road, you can as many friends join as you like.
Do I get a map? No, but the road is indicated on maps.
Will my vehicle get scratched? Highly unlikely.
Should I take a compressor? Yes, and a tyre-repair kit – we had a puncture.
Can I braai along the route? Yes, there are indeed braai spots along this route.
Can I turn around halfway? Indeed.
Is there cellphone signal? It's unreliable, especially in the mountains and gorges.
Best time to go? All year round, but it's hot in February.
Can I take my family along? Yes, definitely.
Can my dog come along? Yes, your furry friend is welcome.
How long does it take? The route takes at least two days.
Are there ablution facilities? In the towns.
Directions The route starts at the Tankwa farm stall on the R355 between Ceres and Calvinia.
Cost The route costs you nothing as it's a public road.

After our visit to Matjiesfontein, we follow the N1 highway to Laingsburg – a town drowned by floods in 1981.

Turn right into Van Riebeeck Street, leading to the Ladismith road or R323. After 71 km, the road bends to the right, taking you through Seweweekspoort. During our visit, however, we continued straight on to drive the Bosluiskloof Pass and stopped for lunch at the Bosch Luys Kloof Lodge. If you'd like to do the same, reserve a spot by calling them on ☎ 023 581 5046 or visiting the lodge's website at 🖱 boschluyskloof.co.za

As the lunch settles, we drive through Seweweekspoort, one of South Africa's most impressive gorges, to the twin mission stations Amalienstein and Zoar. Here we turn right onto the R62 regional road and drive through Ladismith to the famous Ronnies Sex Shop. Feel free to pop in and support Ronnie, even if it's just to buy a cooldrink.

Your final destination is Barrydale, but before you conclude the tour, stop at the eatery Diesel & Crème, where you can enjoy a delicious milkshake. Then park your rig in front of the Karoo Art Hotel – your accommodation for the night. The hotel even has rooms where your dog is welcome. Prices in this boutique hotel range from R770 to R1 000 per person. End your journey in the hotel's popular bar, where the locals gather in the evenings, and then enquire about the Birrydale 365. We don't want to spoil the surprise for you, but it involves a refreshing awakening… ●



> "It's a road that's less used, so do first inquire at the farm stall whether it's currently passable"

KAROO HOSPITALITY. At Sutherland's observatory you'll find the impressive South African Large Telescope (left) and after a good night's rest at Rogge Cloof Guest Farm (above) we'll drive the Bosluiskloof Pass (below). End your trip in Barrydale at Diesel & Crème (below middle) where you can freeze your brain with an icy cold milkshake.

Here's what we drove

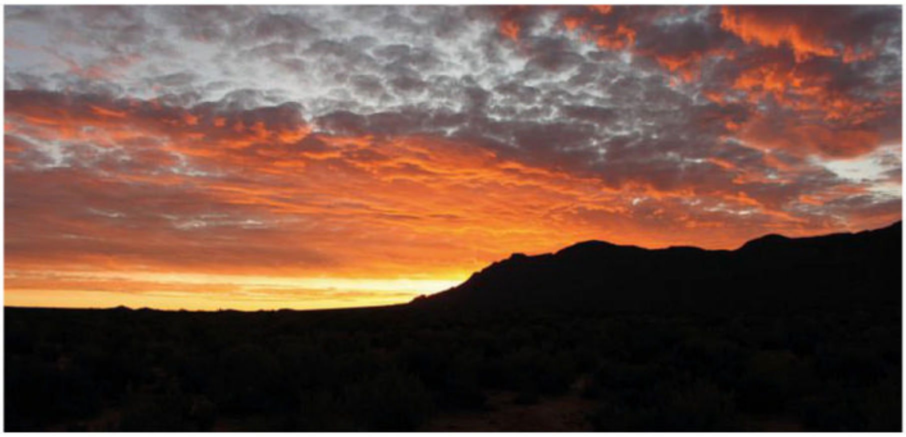
Kia South Africa invited us to spend a weekend with them. They paid for everything and provided the vehicles. Our Kia Seltos was the 1,4 ℓ turbopetrol with a dual-clutch gearbox.

Power output is 103 kW, and its torque figure is 242 Nm at 1 500 rpm. Its suspension impressed on the dirt roads, and although the vehicle doesn't have all-wheel drive, its generous ground clearance helped us get through deep washouts. Prices start at R436 995 for the manual 1.6 EX base model and goes up to the 1.4T DCT GT-line we drove at R532 995.

Contact kia.co.za

A tiny jewel

When they visited the Anysberg Nature Reserve for the first time earlier this year, they weren’t sure what to expect. **Piet and Magda Janse van Rensburg** from Villiersdorp tell us about their experience.



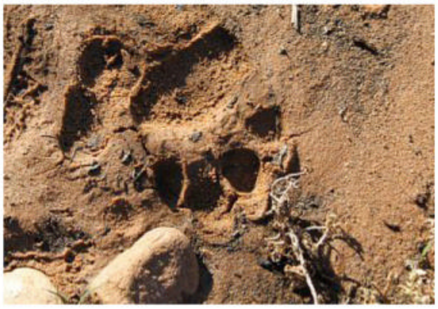
“We’d only heard of Anysberg before. So, when we decided to head out there at the end of March this year, we had no clue what awaited us. We just told each other we’d go and see, come what may.

WHAT ARE THE ROAD CONDITIONS?

During our drive, the 78 km gravel road from Touwsrivier was in good condition and we made good progress. However, our spirits dipped a little shortly after passing through Anysberg Nature Reserve’s entrance gate.

The feeling was that if the campsite looked like the road, the chances of a delightful experience were slim. Let’s just say it took us about an hour to cover the 28 km from the gate to the campsite. It’s not that the road was necessarily terrible, but there were places where we had to drive through wash-outs, and it took a lot of time.

We were also grateful not to be driving a sedan. I can’t imagine how you’d make it. Due to recent flooding in the area,



there was quite a bit of damage to the roads, but I'm happy to say some of them had already been fixed when we got there. We couldn't drive on all the roads in the reserve, as some were not yet repaired.

TELL US MORE ABOUT THE CAMPSITE.
The campsite was a pleasant surprise. The reception building sports a new white coat of paint and looks quite posh. The ablution block is impeccably neat and clean, and it's clear someone cleans it every day.

The stands – only five – are just as tidy, and each is properly fenced off and private. During our visit, there were no empty stands. Each stand has a braai, bin, table with benches, and a sun umbrella. The braais and bins are cleaned early in the morning by staff.

The natural beauty here is incredible. After the lovely rain that had fallen before our visit, the Karoo was absolutely beautiful. The sunsets we experienced will stay with us for a long time. We'd like to compliment and thank the management and staff – and of course Cape Nature Conservation – for a wonderful destination that is excellently managed. It truly is a gem.

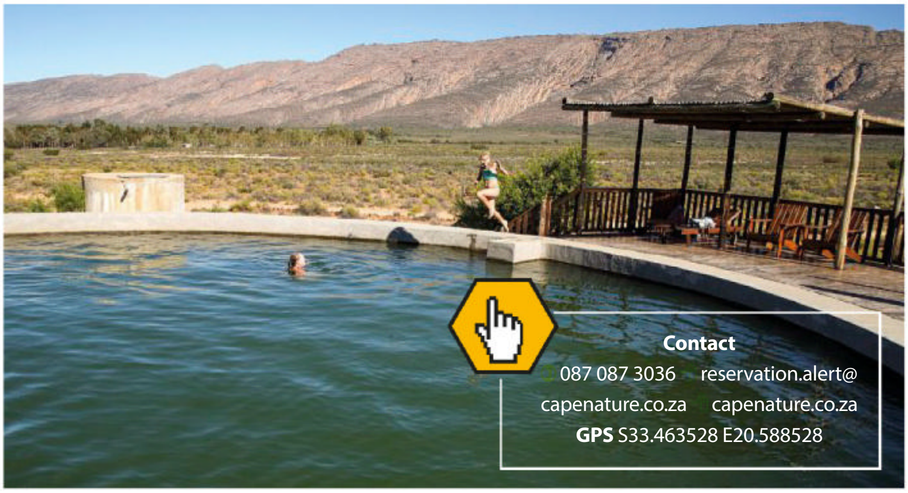
WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?
The main activities for guests here appear to be hiking and cycling; thus, there are many routes to explore. There's also a beautiful large dam where you can cool off if you visit during the warmer months. We saw quite a few animals, including gemsbok, red hartebeest, a duiker, kudu and various bird species. We also came across a footprint that looked like it might belong to a leopard. In the campsite, a gemsbok came to check us out and graze on the grass. There are also horses, and the reserve's staff bring them to the campsite early in the morning. If you want to go horse riding, you can arrange it with them.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW ABOUT CAMPING HERE?
Due to the threat posed to the vegetation by the borer beetle, you may not bring your own wood. We brought charcoal to braai with, but you can also buy wood at reception.

WIN **Piet and Magda** won a **Camp Cover Camera bag** worth R400.

Check out the superb range of protective covers on their website:
campcover.co.za

CAMP COVER



Contact
087 087 3036 reservation.alert@capenature.co.za capenature.co.za
GPS S33.463528 E20.588528

A lucky 13 with Lady

Some cars are famous, while others are legendary, says **Danie Pienaar** from the Strand. He shares the story of his 1984 Land Cruiser FJ60, powered by a 4,23 ℓ six-cylinder petrol engine.

“I wanted one like that and nothing else. And she had to have the United Nations’ UN insignia on the door. Nothing less would do.

I searched for nearly four years and finally found her at Windhoek’s airport – lonely and ownerless. Apparently, she was one of 60 Land Cruisers that arrived in the former South West Africa. It was at the time when the United Nations oversaw the peace process and elections. Rumour has it that six of the Cruisers ‘disappeared’ somewhere between Walvis Bay and Windhoek upon arrival.

I paid R50 000 for her. She was like a child with a dirty face, and it was time to clean her up.

This Cruiser wasn’t an ordinary vehicle. She had leaf springs front and rear, easily tackling today’s pothole-ridden roads. She had standard 4x4 drive without a diff lock, and the only electronic gadget was the radio. The windows were manually wound up and down, and the side mirrors were so large you could almost see into the previous generation. I could load a full one tonne of luggage inside and on top of her, and venture to places where few people would dare to go.

I spent a lot of time with her. Everything that could be unscrewed was disassembled, removed, or taken apart and restored or replaced – sometimes with parts from Japan. Every Saturday, I’d straddle the engine and ask, ‘What shall we remove today?’ She didn’t have air-conditioning, but rather something you might describe as a ‘cooling plant’ – it

TOYOTA
CEY 25971

TOYOTA
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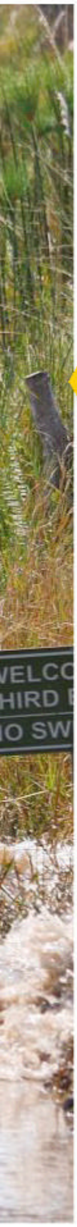
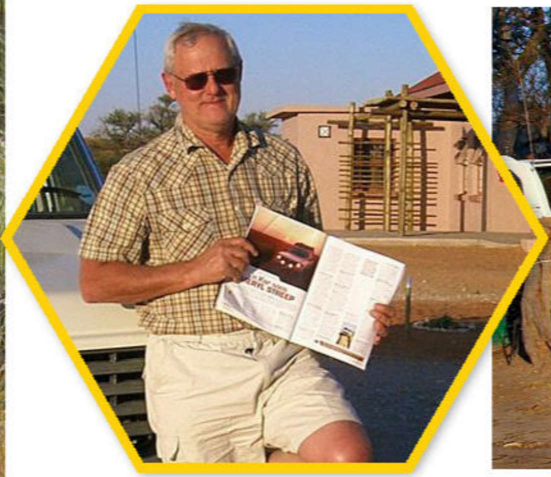
> So, my journey with Lady spanned 13 years. We knocked on almost every door: everything south of the Congo was our target





TOYOTA
CEY 25971

COVER GIRL. Danie's humble Lady tread deep tracks accross Southern Africa. Danie could spend hours telling you about all the places he's been to with his wheels.

worked wonderfully well. She also didn't have powered brakes; instead, a sort of deceleration system. When you hit the brakes, the seat belts strained to keep your face from smacking the windshield.

Literally everything in Lady was redesigned. In the 13 years we've been together, the engine with its 750 000 km has never been split apart.

Back then, I also contributed to the then *Buite-Burger*. At the time, there weren't many outdoor magazines, and you had to travel far and wide for research on 4x4 routes and campsites. Many of the places that are well-known today were entirely unknown back then. The Cruiser effortlessly took me on the most challenging 4x4 mountain routes in our country, and every Tuesday we updated the newspaper readers.

With the advent of GPS devices, the world opened up for us, and I consulted the hand-drawn maps of the famous Jan Joubert less and less. As a pilot, I initially tried to use a flight GPS, but it didn't work. I remember my friend Niel de Kock from De Doorns testing the 'new generation' GPS on our long journey across the Liuwa Plain, and we still got lost.

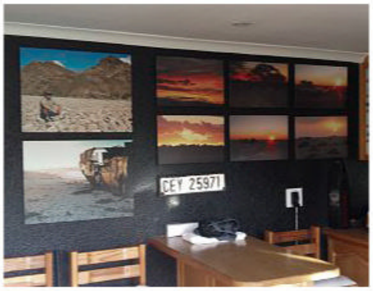
Because my Cruiser had wormed its way into everyone's hearts, Megan Herselman, a fellow journalist, christened her Lady.

So, my journey with Lady spanned 13 years. We knocked on almost every door: everything south of the Congo was our target. One day, Bun Booyens, the first editor of *Weg*, gathered us and said there should be an Afrikaans outdoor magazine. (*And the rest is history! – Ed*) It was time to get down to business.

Lady's face often appeared on the outdoor pages. Today, I sit nostalgically flipping through a thick album full of articles where she appeared. The memories take me down a road of many experiences. Lady was the thirteenth vehicle through the Mata Mata border post after it opened. There were days when we wondered if Lady would make it in the soft sand of the Khaudum – then she simply dug her wheels in, raised her nose like a charging bull, and carried on. There were times when she didn't hesitate to keep swimming, with her

What about your wheels?
Send us an email at drivecamp@gomag.co.za and tell us about your ride.

SIMPLICITY. The most advanced piece of technology in Lady was the stereo system. The engine was bulletproof and selling her was one of Danie's biggest heartbreaks. All that remains of Lady are the memories and her numberplate on a wall.



lights barely above the waters of Moremi. On the way to Lüderitz, a sandstorm blasted the paint off her chassis, and another time in Botswana, she twisted and turned through the bush as she disappeared under the mud – barely recognisable. She was a brave car that showed her mettle.

After Lady and I spent a Saturday together, she shone so brightly that she could confidently take a stand alongside the newest and most modern cars. Yet she wasn't a flashy car; rather, an unassuming vehicle designed to serve – sometimes, I felt the Cruiser was simply too 'dumb' to break. Every time we hit the road heavily loaded, it felt like a ship sailing out of the harbour. Each trip was an experience, and every time we sat far from civilisation by our campfire, she patiently waited in the background. All our friends loved her and swore we would be buried together someday.

With the arrival of the off-road trailer era, it became clear that her 96 kW engine would run out of breath on the long haul. For the last time, we packed the roof rack and took all our camping gear, two fridges, and a custom rack system for Lady into the Central Kalahari to say goodbye. As if a few lions knew Lady wouldn't return to the Deception Valley, they lay down next to her, their manes brushed against her wheels as thunderclouds hung over us.

It was with great sorrow that I watched her disappear around the street corner here in Strand – my wife, Susan, disappeared into town as she didn't want to be there for the farewell. Now we drive a powerful 4 ℓ vehicle that easily tows our off-road trailer and our caravan. Other than all the beautiful memories, only one thing remains of Lady: her number plate, proudly displayed on the wall of my braai room. ●

GEARED UP
READY TO GO

When the open road calls, you need to make sure your equipment is in top condition. Nobody wants to lose steam along the way.

For your body to perform optimally, including sexually, you need to keep all the elements of your urinary, reproductive and circulatory systems in order. Vascamen, a daily herbal supplement specially formulated for men, can help do just that.

When the next adventure beckons and you choose to celebrate your love for your partner, you can ensure everything goes smoothly.

S0 D 33.7 Complementary Medicine; Combination product
Komplementêre Medisyne; Kombinasie produk
VASCAMEN
Unique supplement for men
HORNY GOAT WEED, TRIBULUS & SAW PALMETTO

G_VM_03/23

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Desert adventures in Namibia

Embarking on a road trip through Namibia with a regular caravan is possible, reveals **Pieter van der Merwe** of Riebeeckstad. Aim north and stick to the excellent tar roads. The most amazing journey awaits!

It took a year or two of thorough planning (and saving) before six couples from Riebeeckstad – Jurie and Adriana Blom, Sarel and Ester Griesel, Pedro and Elize Erasmus, Frank and Desirè Korb, Gert and Christien Viljoen, and Pieter and Annette van der Merwe – were ready for a 25-day, 6 000 km tour of Namibia. In the group were a slew of off-road trailers: two Bush Lapas, a Conqueror Companion, a Sprite Tourer, and a LeBusha, but also a Sprite Swing and a Gypsy Rapsody. Pieter tells us more.

“After the first leg of 330 km on the first day, we ended up at Riverside Lodge near Ritchie, where Hansie and Elize Bekker from Parys joined us. The campsite is a delightful and tidy overnight facility along the Renoster River (you can, of course, stay longer), and the best overnight spot we found near Kimberley.

As the roosters crowed (quite literally, as some trailers were parked right by a chicken coop), day two began, taking us through Griekwastad and Groblershoop to Oranjerus: a gem along the Orange River near Kanoneiland. The road undulates through the Green Kalahari beyond Groblershoop. The Orange River, flowing at higher levels than usual past Oranjerus, presents an impressive sight.

This is a beautiful resort with large lawns, shade trees and excellent ablution facilities. It’s a great spot to explore the wines of the Orange River region.

Early on the morning of day three, we hit the road to the South African border post at Nakop to enter Namibia at Ariamsvlei. We drove past the impressive collection of sociable weaver nests hanging on the telephone poles.

Arrive with lots of patience at the border as it will take some time – and keep your sense of humour. Then you’ll enjoy the notice at the border post’s ‘lawn’ (about one square metre in a flower box) with the clear instruction: ‘Stay off the grass!’ If you’re not a fan of armoured bush crickets (*koringkrieke*), tread carefully – they’re everwhere. Keep your passport, vehicle registration documents, and a few hundred rand in cash handy for a smooth border crossing experience.

Also, be prepared to open your vehicle and caravan for a customs inspection. Make sure you know the rules and regulations regarding the transport of red meat, so you don't suffer any losses.

THE VAST PLAINS OF NAMIBIA lay beneath a white blanket of swaying grass, thanks to the plentiful rain, with little of the rocky desert in sight. We left Karrasburg and Grünau behind after driving several kilometres of 'red road', where we had to drive over millions of red locusts crossing the road.

Our first stop in Namibia was near Keetmanshoop at The Quiver Tree Caravan Park. To get there, you must brave around 500 km of tar road (from Oranjerus) and 13 km of good dirt road, but it's well worth it. The campsite is typical Namibian rocky desert, and the facilities are basic but clean, with hot water and clean toilets.

From here, walk to the famous quiver tree forest – and just a bit farther, you get to the playground of the giants. In this unique landscape, you'll see enormous rocks stacked upon each other as if arranged by giants. It's a must-see on your way north.

If you go to the farmstead near the campsite around 17:00, you can learn interesting facts about cheetahs and watch them being fed.

THE FOURTH DAY'S almost 500 km takes you past Mariental and Rehoboth before reaching Windhoek. Here, you can set up camp at the Arebbusch Caravan Park. It's a luxury resort with chalets, conference facilities, a swimming pool and a restaurant. The camping stands are located in two nearby areas: one group on grass with shade-net canopies; the other along the stream on sandy ground but with shade trees. Everyone shares the same modern and clean ablution block.

Windhoek is a beautiful, clean city with modern buildings in a variety of contemporary architectural styles. Spend a day or two here and consider a guided city tour. This way, you'll learn about German history, including a visit to the oldest building in the city, Alte Feste.

In celebration of Namibian independence, several buildings were erected by North Koreans, and at the Parliament building, there are also statues of freedom fighters including Hendrik Witbooi. The guided tour also takes you to Katutura ('The place where we do not want to stay') with its ethnic neighborhoods, remnants of Namibia's apartheid days.

Visit the Oshetu Community Market for an interesting insight into the community's business activities. Rich varieties of food and everything else can be found in a tidy and clean building. You

SOUTH AFRICA
NAKOP
BORDER CONTROL

can buy a piece of meat right off the braai and enjoy it on delicious, fresh roosterkoek or vetkoek. If you're brave enough, you can even nibble on dried mopane worms or dried fish. Do have a bite Joe's Beer House. It's an à la carte restaurant and truly a unique experience.

AFTER TWO DAYS of exploring Windhoek, we ventured farther north, passing Okahandja, Otjiwarongo, and Outjo. A Namibian trip is incomplete if you don't pop into Outjo's bakery with its delicious bread and pastries.

We set up camp at Okaukuejo ('The place where women have a baby every year') after a 440 km drive to Etosha. Etosha has a charm of its own. Everything is truly white: the campsite, the roads, and the pan itself.

At the campsite, there's a watering hole where animals come to drink, but during our visit, after the mild rains of the 2022 season, water was readily available in the veld, so fewer animals were present than usual. So, we drove around to find wildlife and enjoy the unique beauty of nature.

The absolute silence at night, the roar of a lion, the eerie howl of a jackal, the brightest stars imaginable, and the russet sunsets and sunrises are an unparalleled balm for the soul.

AFTER FOUR BLISSFUL NIGHTS in Etosha, we made a U-turn and headed southwest towards the beautiful Swakopmund. We passed through Outjo and Otjiwarongo again, and then took the C33 (a good tar road) through Omaruru to Usakos. From there, we joined the B2 to Swakopmund.

It's a drive slightly over 500 km drive and it suddenly becomes worth it as you pass through the white rocky desert and enter Namibia's gem. If you hit the road around 07:00 in Etosha, you could comfortably arrive in Swakopmund by 16:00. It's easy to see why this town has been voted the 'Town of the Year' on the TV show *Kwêla*.

It's worth spending several days in Swakopmund as there's plenty to do and see. Alte Brücke is a luxury caravan park with beautiful grassy stands, tar roads and private ablution facilities for each stand – all at a fair rate.

Explore the town with its wide open and immaculately clean streets. Visit charming shops, dazzling coffee shops, excellent restaurants and the crystal museum. Stroll up and down the streets admiring the beautiful German architecture, especially in the older parts of the town.

Visiting the crystal museum is worth your time. All of Namibia's unique semi-precious stones are on display here, including pietersite, which is unique to Namibia and found nowhere else. If you have a few South African rands or Namibian dollars in your pocket, get yourself some of these beautiful stones.

Now you finally get acquainted with the sandy desert as you drive on the tar road from Swakopmund past Long Beach to Walvis Bay (a journey of about 30 km), with the ocean almost touching the road on your right and the dunes of the Namib pressing close on your left.

To fully experience the dunes, consider at least the following activities: a quad bike tour over the dunes, perhaps a camel ride in the desert, and a guided 4x4 tour (provided by a tour operator) in search of the elusive Namib's Little Five that hide beneath the sand's surface.

We were fortunate to track down four of the five elusive creatures, namely: two types of lizards, one with legs and one without; a tiny snake that swiftly skims across the sand and disappears just as quickly. If you know where to look, you'll see its head peeking out above the sand or its distinctive sand trail.

A beautiful, colourful, and translucent gecko, whose spine you can see, also made an appearance. An interesting feature of this creature is the spoon-shaped tips on its toes, which enable it to grip the sand and run incredibly fast across it. During mating season, males bite each other's toes so that only the fastest (with the 'spoons' on their toes) can reach the females.

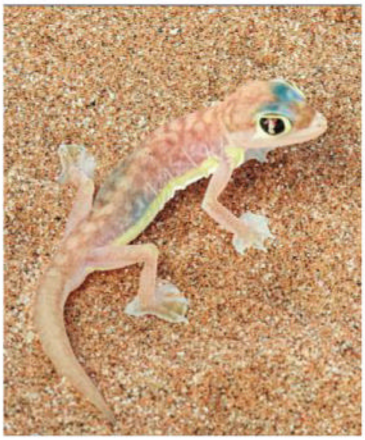
We also witnessed a chameleon unrolling its tongue and catching a grasshopper to devour.

A VISIT TO DUNE 7 near Walvis Bay, the highest dune in Namibia, is also a unique experience. The fit climb to the top, while the less fit venture only a short distance or take photos.

Don't miss a boat trip in Walvis Bay. Here, friendly seals jump onto the boat for a quick visit and a bite of fish. Back in the water, they swim swiftly alongside the boat, using the wave created by the boat to save energy.

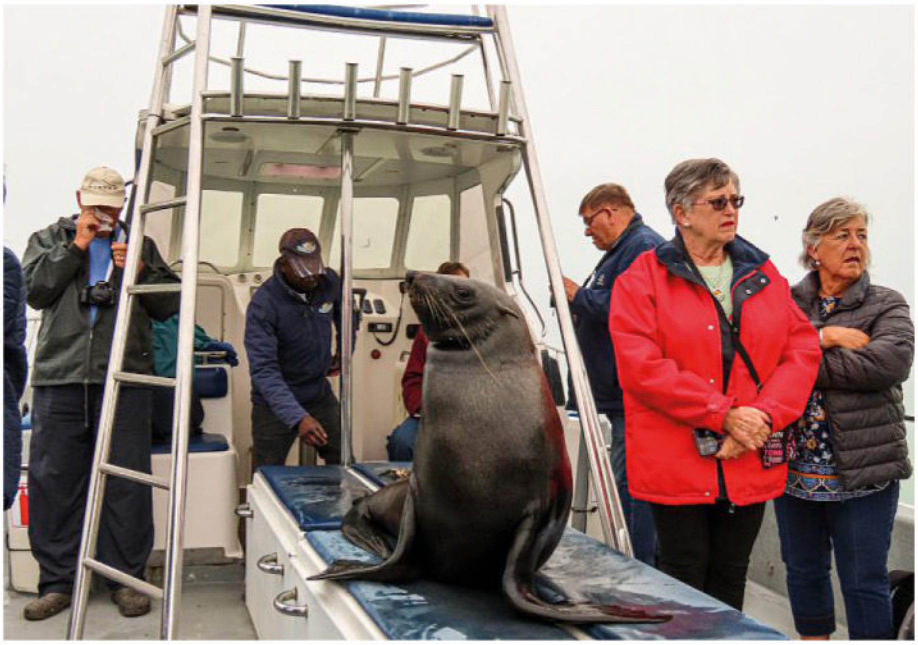
A group of pelicans also joined the ride, confidently waiting for their fishy treats. If

DUNE. The Van der Merwes and their friends were amazed by the many different species of lizards that were adapted to life in the desert.

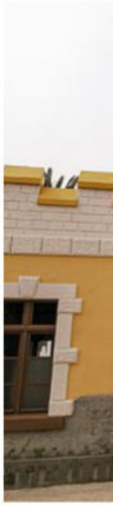


> To fully experience the dunes, consider at least the following activities: a quad bike tour over the dunes…

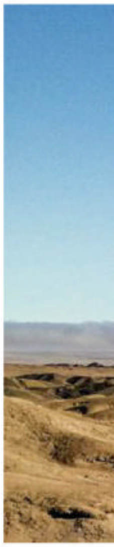
BE HAPPY
HAVE A



BLY VAN DIE
GRAS AF
KEEP OFF THE GRASS
NAKOP
NAMIBIA~RSA



DOUBLE TERMINATED
QUARTZ CRYSTAL
(FLOATER)



you're lucky, you'll also see dolphins and a whale or two.

Drive about 70 km north of Swakopmund to Henties Bay. Once again, you'll see the rocky desert and wonder how humans and animals survive here. Henties has a character all of its own. Many products made from seal leather and fur are available here, and you can also buy delicious fresh fish at a restaurant.

There's a shipwreck near the road, not too far from the turnoff to Bennie's red lorry. The interesting thing is that the eastern wind from the desert blows sand into the sea, and the desert is gradually pushing the sea back. That's why some shipwrecks are no longer in the water.

HEADING BACK TO the Free State from Swakopmund, you have about 2 300 km ahead of you. To liven up the trip and experience more of Namibia, spend a day or two at places like Gross Barmen near Okahandja, Hardap Dam near Mariental, and the White House near Grünau.

Gross Barmen is part of the NWR (Namibian Wildlife Resorts) and boasts modern buildings and facilities. Maintenance could be improved here and there, but the recreational facilities, including a large swimming pool, indoor hot water pool, and a beautiful restaurant make up for it.

We found the Hardap Dam to be a big surprise. It's a remarkably large dam in the middle of a dry stretch of land. It's almost inconceivable that something like this could exist. Don't underestimate the power of this dam. If it bursts its banks, Mariental will face severe flooding.

If you want to drive through the game reserve, don't start too late – the gates close at 16:00. The ablution facilities in

the camp are clean, neat and modern, and are regularly cleaned. Make sure you wear shoes with thick soles in the caravan park. There's a carpet of dry devil's thorns, and when you step into the ablution area, it sounds as though you're wearing rugby boots. Flip-flops will not do.

The White House near Grünau is a charming overnight spot with chalets and space for several caravans. They mine rose quartz here, and if you have some Namibian dollars left over, spend them on a few semi-precious stones.

The farms in the area are vast… truly vast… up to 30 000 hectares in size. The local farmers primarily raise game, sheep and cattle.

As the Orange River was in flood during our return, we decided to stop at Augrabies Falls as well. After a quick visit to the Pienk Padstal in Kakamas, we were amazed by the spectacle the waterfall presented. What an experience! It was definitely worth the extra few kilometres of driving. Those familiar with the area will understand when we say that you could feel the spray from the waterfall up to the parking area near reception. (If you don't feel like doing dishes, do sit down at their restaurant for excellent food.)

The last two legs of the journey, first back to Ritchie's Riverside Lodge and then home, brought this unforgettable 25-day experience to a close.

Despite all the wonderful new experiences, we all agreed: it was great to be back home.

CAMP COVER
www.campcover.co.za

Pieter wins a **Camp Cover Bundu Bag** worth R400. This multipurpose bag is so versatile that it could house lots of nifty first-aid items or double as a weekend case. Check out Camp Cover's range on their website **campcover.co.za.**

WIN

MOON. The Namib is in places almost otherworldly and the desert offers curious semi-precious stones and crystals that are perfect as gifts or keepsakes.

Camping happiness

Embracing the great outdoors for body and soul, Gretha Schoonraad never stops camping, even when she's not feeling her best.

Words **Leon Botha**

Gretha's story is an inspiration to everyone, especially campers. Faced with the challenge of glandular cancer, Gretha embraces life with open arms and an unwavering spirit. Instead of wallowing in self-pity, she even told her doctor to wait, as she was going camping first.

Gretha owns her camping gear and sets up camp herself. Tietiesbaai often sees her, and she cherishes the moments spent camping with all her friends. Gretha tells us more.

“I received the bad news four years ago: My leg had been terribly swollen, and the outcome was

Ons Wil Net Kamp
MARKET
OCEAN
DELI
COAST DAY

LIFE GOES ON. Gretha is a camping person down to her bones. She packs, tows and pitches all by herself, even though she has enough friends to help her. It's not uncommon for Gretha to arrive at a campsite before her friends and have everything set up first.

a cancer diagnosis. However, I grew up in a camping household and quickly decided that I wouldn't let this situation get me down.

My father, Billy Laurence, was a wine farmer in Stellenbosch, and we would often pack the white Pontiac, hitch the caravan, and head to the Strand. There was room for everyone: my mother Elsa, and my sister and brother, Marlize and James, and me. In fact, James still camps with me and all our other friends today.

I started my career as a hairdresser in Stellenbosch, and during my married life, would regularly camp in Stilbaai. We had an Echo 4 off-road trailer, but unfortunately, the marriage eventually came to an end. The Echo was too big for me on my own, so I got myself a Wilderness trailer with a tent on top.

Then a group of friends invited me to join them camping at Gert du Toit se Baai, past Koekenaap. A year or two later, James invited me to camp at Tietiesbaai, and that's where the tradition began. Our group has grown to over 10 friends, and we even had special T-shirts made that say, 'We just want to camp'. ”

James says their group of friends always have a great time together, and he can't stop raving about Gretha's paella.

"I dive for the mussels, and Gretha cooks the chicken breasts. This dish is one of her favourites, and everyone joins in to enjoy it. She loves camping so much that she has even persuaded non-campers to join in. She sets up camp herself; I might help with the tent's fly sheet if needed. Next thing you know, she's wielding a hammer, pounding tent pegs, or cranking down the corner steadies.

She'll drive 175 km to Tietiesbaai all by herself, arriving first and waiting for the rest of us. I tip my hat to her."

Malcolm King from Somerset West is also part of the friend circle and was once a partner in the hair salon business. He says they've gone camping far and wide. They've known each other for the past decade or so, and he says Gretha's positive attitude is a significant part of who she is.

"It's all about Grietjie [Malcolm's nickname for her] as a person. She has a tremendous number of friends

and is beloved by everyone. It's about her honesty and sincerity. She's like a sociable weaver bird, enjoying seeing all her friends happy around her. She simply lives life to the fullest: camping, socialising, and barbecuing."

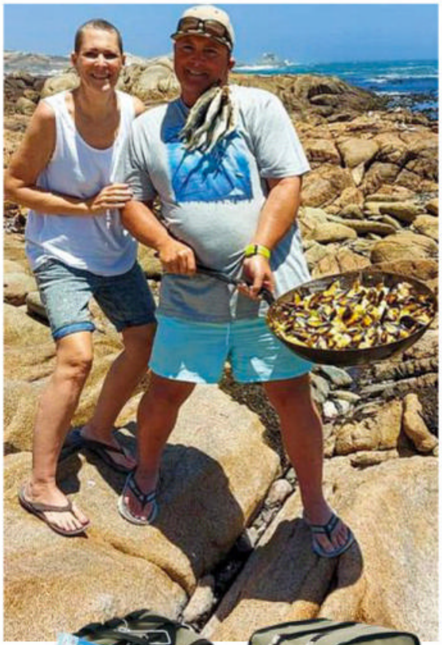
The bad news came just after Easter in 2019, and doctors immediately began treatment. December arrived, and Gretha told the doctors to hold on as she wanted to go camping. And so, it goes year after year. The hospital staff reportedly say they've never seen a patient quite like her. Sometimes she's weak, but she tries to do everything herself at the campsite – yes, including the braais. She packs her towing vehicle herself and does the same with her latest Wilderness trailer. She's also had a caravan and a tent, but she prefers the Wilderness.

"You have to be positive," says Gretha. "If you sit still, you'll die. At Tietiesbaai, for example, you're immersed in the sea air – I don't lie down in the camper during the day; no, I enjoy the outdoors and the fire – it must always be going!"

Gretha lost all her hair at one point, but it didn't bother her much. While camping, she often cuts fellow campers' hair because her equipment goes everywhere she goes.

"The cancer is curable, and I visit the doctor once a month. I'm dealing with the disease, it's something I have now. People shouldn't feel sorry for me because I feel as normal as anyone else. I'll camp until I can't anymore. I won't take it lying down."

PEOPLE PERSON. Gretha's personality draws friends wherever she camps, and she's an ace when it comes to making paella.



Gertha wins a **Camp Cover Bundu Bag** worth R400. This bag is so versatile that it could house lots of nifty first-aid items or double as a weekend case. Check out Camp Cover's range on their website. **campcover.co.za**

WIN

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FISHING GEAR

Splish, splash, splosh

Predatory fish in both coastal lagoons and freshwater will have to watch out for Adrenalin's Mad Whirler artificial bait. It's an attention-grabbing lure, but with its twin tripple hooks, there's almost zero chance of escape.
The Mad Whirler is reminiscent of a classic spinner, as the rear part of the lure body rotates as you reel it in. This creates splashes as well as a bubble trail behind the bait.

The bait works as it should while moving and is designed to be effective on the surface. Other surface baits tend to be more effective during the morning or late afternoon, but the Mad Whirler works no matter the time of day.

Because the bait's shape is streamlined, it makes your casting easier when you want it in a specific spot. It's ideal for bass, but a tiger fish might bite and the same goes for shad and garrick.

It's available in two sizes: 90 mm and 130 mm, and five colours.

Price From R120.

Contact Available in fishing shops nationwide – also in Namibia.

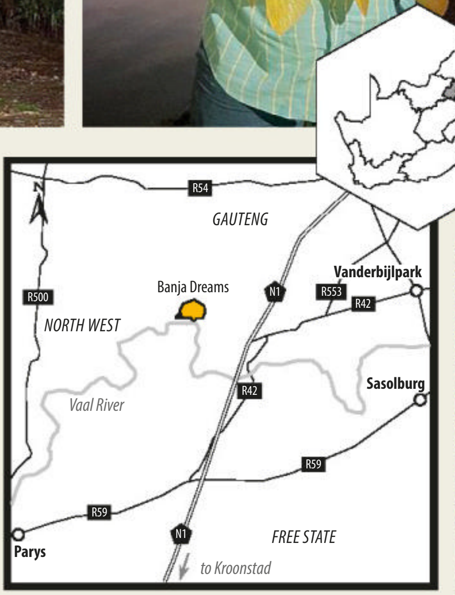
catches@4adrenalin.co.za

adrenalinfishing.co.za

FISHING RESORT

Hook, line and sinker

A recently spruced-up campsite near Vanderbijlpark, Banja Dreams, has you camping on the banks of the Vaal River – and trying your luck to land a big fish or two.



BANJA DREAMS

RIVERSIDE RIPPLES

This spot, formerly known as Geelvis Paradys, has new owners who renamed it. One of the owners, Hector Macpherson, says they've installed new electricity points, refurbished the women's bathroom, added a family bathroom, and built a shelter by the pool.

Banja Dreams lies just outside Vanderbijlpark and sits on the banks of the Vaal River. There are three groups of stands, two of which are by the water. One group on the bank has four stands and there are six in the other group. The third group of seven stands are about 25 m away from the water and closer to the bathrooms. There are facilities for men and women, plus the family bathroom has, among other things, a bath and a changing area for babies. The hot water comes from a solar-powered geyser. There are two more stands that don't have electricity like the others and are located between the cottages and the chalets.

Each regular stand has an electricity point (ordinary domestic socket) and a brick braai. The taps are scattered all

SNOEK ON THE BRAAI

Savour the oriental flavour!

This quick marinade adds an Eastern twist to snoek cooked over the coals.

Ingredients

(serves 4-6)

- 1 whole snoek without the head, cleaned (about 1,2 kg)
- 4 spring onions, chopped or thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted
- 1 lemon, sliced or cut into wedges for serving

FOR THE MARINADE

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 heaped tablespoon fine apricot jam, melted
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- Juice of 1 more small lemon
- 1 teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger

Here's how

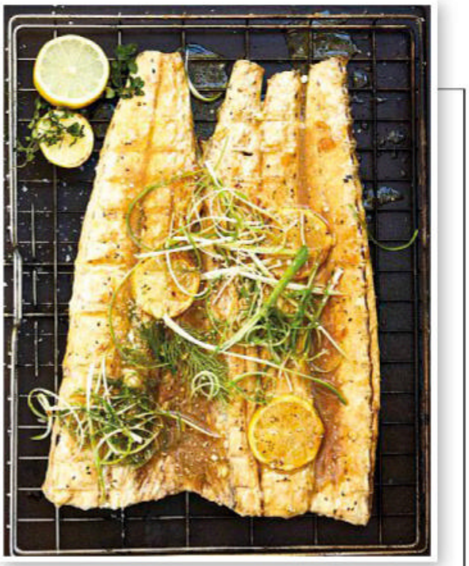
1 Light a fire but don't start it too early – you need hot coals.

2 Rinse the fish well and pat it dry inside and out with paper towels.

3 Whisk together the marinade ingredients and baste the fish all over. Marinate for 15 minutes.

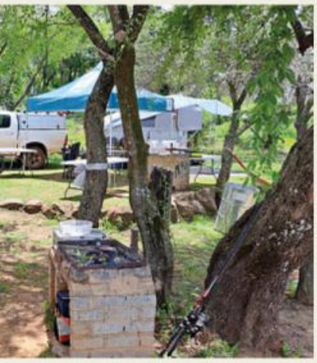
4 Braai the fish in an oil-greased folding grid. It should be over reasonably hot coals until the flesh flakes and is cooked through. This usually takes about 15 minutes, but keep an eye on the fish rather than the clock. I grill the fish skin side down first. Do this until the skin is crispy and the flesh on top starts to cook around the edges before flipping it over for a final 2-5 minutes on the flesh side. If you like, you can brush on more marinade as you flip the fish.

5 Garnish the cooked fish with the thinly sliced spring onions, sprinkle the toasted sesame seeds all over, and serve with the extra lemon. Sweet potatoes go really well with the fish.



Recipe and styling **Johané Neilson** Photo **Ed O'Riley**

***Drive & Camp* says** The soy sauce contains salt, but a sprinkle of sea salt is still a good idea.



over, and you pitch on soil where there's little grass, though you do get shade.

There are two swimming pools: a splash pool for the little ones with a deeper one for others right next to it. There's also a mini-golf course with nine holes – R20 per round. Get the clubs and ball at the shop. They also have fresh goods including milk, bread, and meat, plus wood and charcoal. There's also a jungle gym for the youngsters and a new volleyball court.

The Vaal River is, of course, home to carp, catfish and mudfish, among others, but if your fly-fishing is on point, you also stand a chance of catching a yellowfish. Just remember, it's catch-and-release here.

Briefly | Banja Dreams

Fish Catfish, carp, mudfish, and yellowfish.

Campsite There are 19 stands in three groups with electricity (two groups are by the water) and two separate stands without electricity.

Ablution facilities One building with a newly built family bathroom.

Price R150 per night per stand plus R20 per person per night.

Arrival and departure 07:00 and 19:00.

Contact ✆ 061 181 5069

banjadreams@gmail.com

Banja Dreams

Nearest town Vanderbijlpark, 21 km.

Road condition The last 2,8 km is gravel.

GPS S26.730776 E27.631210

***Drive & Camp* says** Some of the big fish caught here recently include a 15 kg catfish and a 7 kg yellowfish.

Unique, yet so familiar

We spent a week exploring the Kingdom of Eswatini in a Chinese vehicle often mistaken for a certain American brand. Here are our impressions.

Words and photos **Cyril Klopper**

BAIC B40 PLUS

While relatively unknown in South Africa, BAIC is China's fifth-largest vehicle manufacturer. The brand landed on South African soil in 2016 and set up an assembly plant in Gqeberha in 2018. BAIC South Africa currently offers only two vehicle models for sale: the Beijing X55 and the B40 Plus, which we discuss here. A third vehicle called the B80 is on the way, resembling a Mercedes-Benz G-Class, while the B40 Plus you see here may remind you of another off-road vehicle…

What have we got here?

The B40 is definitely inspired by Jeep's Wrangler, but not by cheating. BAIC legitimately purchased the Wrangler concept from General Motors in the previous decade, before the Jeep brand was acquired by the Stellantis Group. That's why the tailgate swings open in the same manner, the mudguards, door hinges, brake lights and even the front grille looks similarly, although BAIC claims the five slits in the grille – not seven like a Jeep – are inspired by China's Great Wall. The roof can also be removed.

The B40 Plus is available in five trim levels and two engine options: a 2 ℓ petrol and 2 ℓ diesel, both turbocharged. All versions of the B40 Plus have part-time four-wheel drive, but you can also choose between a six-speed automatic or a six-speed manual gearbox.

Our test vehicle was the B40 Plus Champion flagship model with a turbopetrol engine and automatic gearbox.

The interior

In a surprising turn of events, the instrument panel doesn't resemble a Jeep at all, but rather a Mercedes-Benz. BAIC manufactures the C- and E-Class on behalf of Daimler AG for the Chinese market under the trade name Beijing Benz. (That's why the upcoming B80 looks like a Merc G-wagon.)

The interior is well appointed with ample shoulder and legroom. There's dual-zone climate control, an electronic handbrake, push-start button, cruise control, electrically adjustable seats (driver's only) and USB ports. The cloth upholstery appears durable and the ergonomics is well executed.

As for safety, you get anti-lock brakes, electronic brakeforce distribution, stability control, traction control, front airbags (none in the rear), a tyre pressure monitor, parking sensors and a reverse camera.

The boot space can be expanded from 532 ℓ to 965 ℓ by flipping the rear seats forward. Unfortunately, the boot doesn't come with a cover to conceal your camping gear when leaving your vehicle unattended in a parking area.

KNOWN. The mudguards of the B40 is narrower than a Wrangler's, resulting in a sligthly roomier interior.

How does it drive?

The 2 ℓ petrol engine pulls relatively strong and acceleration is quite smooth for a vehicle weighing over two tonnes. The suspension is appropriatley tuned for comfortable rides on rough dirt roads, and body roll through bendy tarred road is acceptable. The 17″ wheels also have enough rubber between the road surface and the alloys, allowing you to drive through potholes without feeling like you might crack a vertebra.

We're not fond of the automatic gearbox, though. It makes odd decisions, like maintaining a given gear when you want it to shift, and other times it changes gears when you'd rather keep the current one. This quirk fortunately only emerges when tackling technical terrain in two-wheel drive and isn't much of a problem under normal driving conditions. BAIC is aware of the issue, and subsequent models will come with a better gearbox by ZF.

As mentioned, the ride quality is good, and during the week we spent behind the wheel, we never felt uncomfortable. The cabin is surprisingly quiet for a vehicle with such a boxy shape, and the Bluetooth radio's sound is clearly audible at highway speeds.

Regarding 4x4 capabilities, we drove Eswatini's muddy forestry roads, requiring us to engage low-range gears. The all-terrain tyres struggled to get traction in deep mud, but the four-wheel-drive system performed well. We also tackled rocky terrain, and we believe that the ground clearance is sufficient for most 4x4 routes.

The B40 lacks diff locks, relying instead on its electronic traction control to keep wheel spin in check. However, it works effectively, and we never got stuck.

The B40's Achilles heel is its fuel consumption. At highway speeds, the gauge consistently read 13 ℓ/100 km, but in Eswatini, where speed limits are seldom above 100 km/h, we managed to bring it down to 12 ℓ/100 km. In our opinion, that's a bit thirsty for a 2 ℓ engine.

The competitors

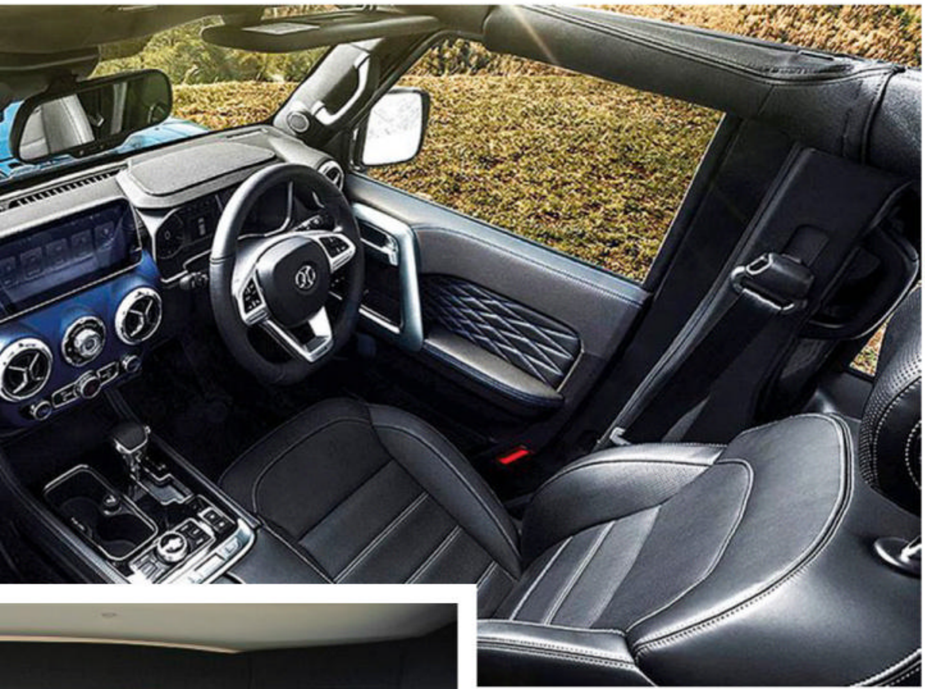
It's challenging to pinpoint a competitor for the BAIC B40 Plus, as it's such a unique vehicle. Pricewise, the Mahindra Scorpio-N is more or less its counterpart, but the

> "The B40 lacks diff locks, relying instead on its electronic traction control to keep wheel spin in check. However, it works effectively, and we never got stuck"

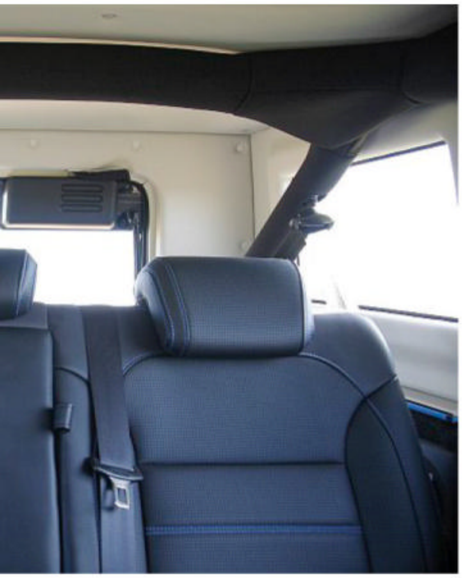
SPECIFICATIONS

Model	B40 PLUS Champion
Engine	1 999 cc four-cylinder turbopetrol
Power	160 kW @ 4 000 rpm
Torque	320 Nm @ 1 800 rpm
Gearbox	Six-speed automatic
Drive	Part-time four-wheel drive
Ground clearance	210 mm
Approach and departure angles	37° and 31°
Ramp angle	23°
Fuel tank	75 ℓ
Fuel consumption	12,8 ℓ/100 km (tested)
Standard tyres	265/65R17
Weight	2 110 kg
Dimensions	4 645 (l) x 1 925 (w) x 1 871 mm (h)
Towing capacity	Unknown
Safety rating	Not tested
Warranty	Five years/120 000 km
Service plan	Four years/60 000 km
Price	R649 500

BAIC
KY 69 JB



OPEN UP! The front roof panels pop out by turning a few latches. If you want to go completely topless, you'll need to take the afternoon off and use tools. Visibility through the rear window is limited, but fortunately the reverse camera helps in this regard.



Mahindra is larger and has seven seats. The Jeep Wrangler Rubicon is the closest competitor in spirit, but it's significantly more expensive than the B40 Plus, and the Jeep's off-road capability is next level good, thanks to an abundance of diff lockers and other 4x4 McGafters.

The Toyota FJ Cruiser and Hummer H3 could have been candidates, but those vehicles are no longer produced, and the upcoming five-door Suzuki Jimny is too small to draw comparisons. This leaves us with the Toyota LC76 station wagon – another unique vehicle with a price tag slightly below a million bucks.

In short, the BAIC B40 Plus doesn't have an obvious competitor, even though it reminds you of other vehicles.

Conclusion

The BAIC B40 Plus is an unusual vehicle that fills a niche market. It's attractive and the ride quality is comfortable. The manufacturer hasn't been in the country long enough for us to comment on reliability, but our limited experience suggests that the B40 Plus is well put together.

We don't predict that the B40 Plus will sell in large numbers, but if you're looking for 'something different,' do consider it.

From the competitors

Four-door off-roaders with Jeep-inspired looks, plus an actual Jeep.

R590 000 **Mahindra Scorpio-N Z8L**

For R60 000 less, you get a lot more car for your money.

R992 300 **Toyota Land Cruiser 76**

It's old, but definitely not cold!

R1 099 900 **Jeep Wrangler Rubicon**

If you're looking for something Jeep-like, why not get the real McCoy?

Double the way

If a well-equipped kitchen and luxuries like your own shower tent are important to you, the Armadillo XTR312 is ready for a couple who wants to head into the bundus.

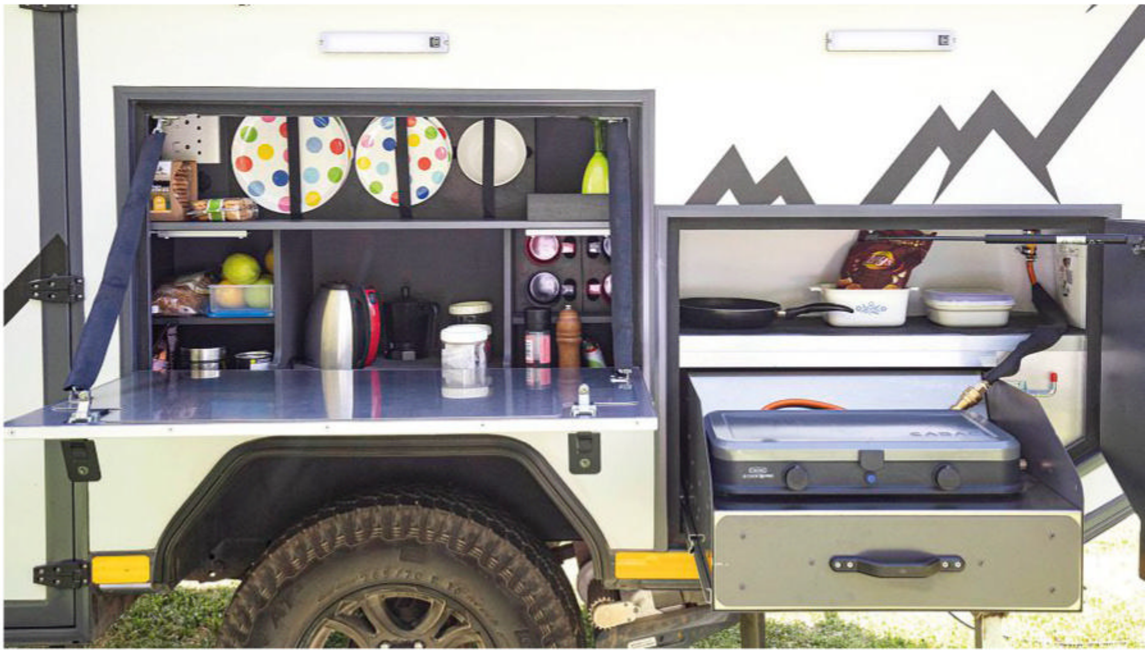
Words and photos **Leon Botha**

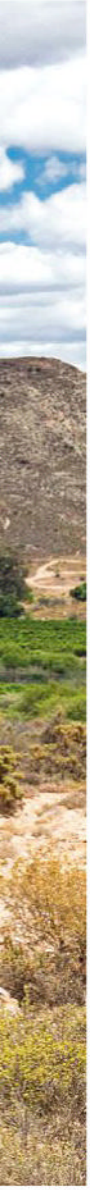
Armadillo XTR 312
by XtremeOutdoor
www.xog.co.za
XOG.CO.ZA
XTREME OUTDOOR
CY 445-214

ARMADILLO XTR312

Off-road caravans usually have a fold-out bed, but then you have caravans like the Armadillo XTR312 that sleeps two, with the bed occupying a large part of the interior. Some campers prefer this as it's to some extent safer as your cocoon isn't made of canvas but of solid panels.

The XTR312 also has a few unique features that make life even easier in the campsite, such as the two gas cylinders and separate stove. Even the shower tent with its double sides is a convenience that you won't see on many other off-road caravans.





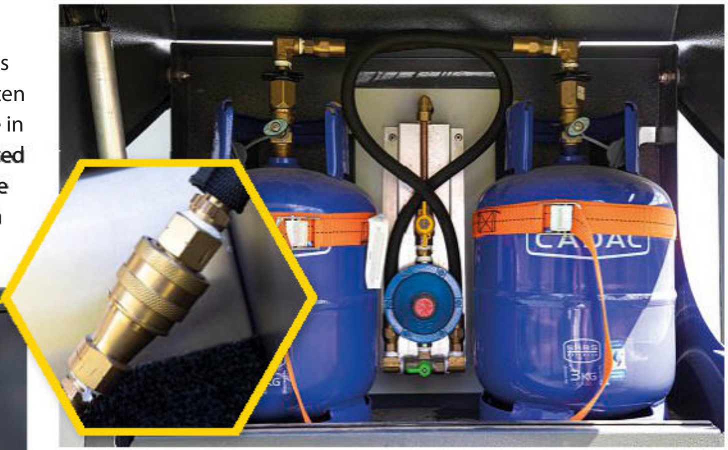
A kitchen par excellence

The camp stove is the heart of your kitchen, and it's usually next to the worktop. Some are standalones while others are mounted or even pull out over the worktop. It does, however, take up valuable space on the worktop. Not in the Armadillo. The two-burner gas stove pulls out on its own sliding frame from the right-hand cupboard at the back. The open cupboard door serves as a proper wind shield at the same time. The tray with all the cutlery pulls out under the stove, and above the stove – right at the back – is a shelf that can fit a small pan or two, food tins or your tin of rusks. (You also have the option to move the stove inside the door, where it then lies flat.)

In our test model, you have to connect the stove's gas line with a socket in the hull, but new models have a fixed connection. The hose runs from the gas cylinder – which is located around the corner near the roof in its own cupboard. The Armadillo has two gas cylinders and a system you don't find often in a caravan. Both cylinders are in one cupboard and are connected to the same regulator – you use the feed valve to choose which cylinder to use. So, if one is empty, you can easily switch to the other. Near the regulator is another valve that switches off to make sure there is no gas in the hoses while you're driving. It's a double safety measure, as it's in addition to the gas cylinders' own valves.

The worktop with a stainless-steel finish (1 000 x 570 mm) folds open – as in many off-road trailers – over the left wheel with the usual open cupboards behind in the body. Inside are foam forms in which all the plates, glasses and cups fit to protect them on bumpy roads. There is even room for the coffee pot and kettle. The worktop itself is smooth without an edge, which means easy cleaning for you. A double three-prong socket (220 V) is located above the cupboard on the left, along with two USB sockets and a Hella socket, conveniently close for the kettle or toaster on the worktop.

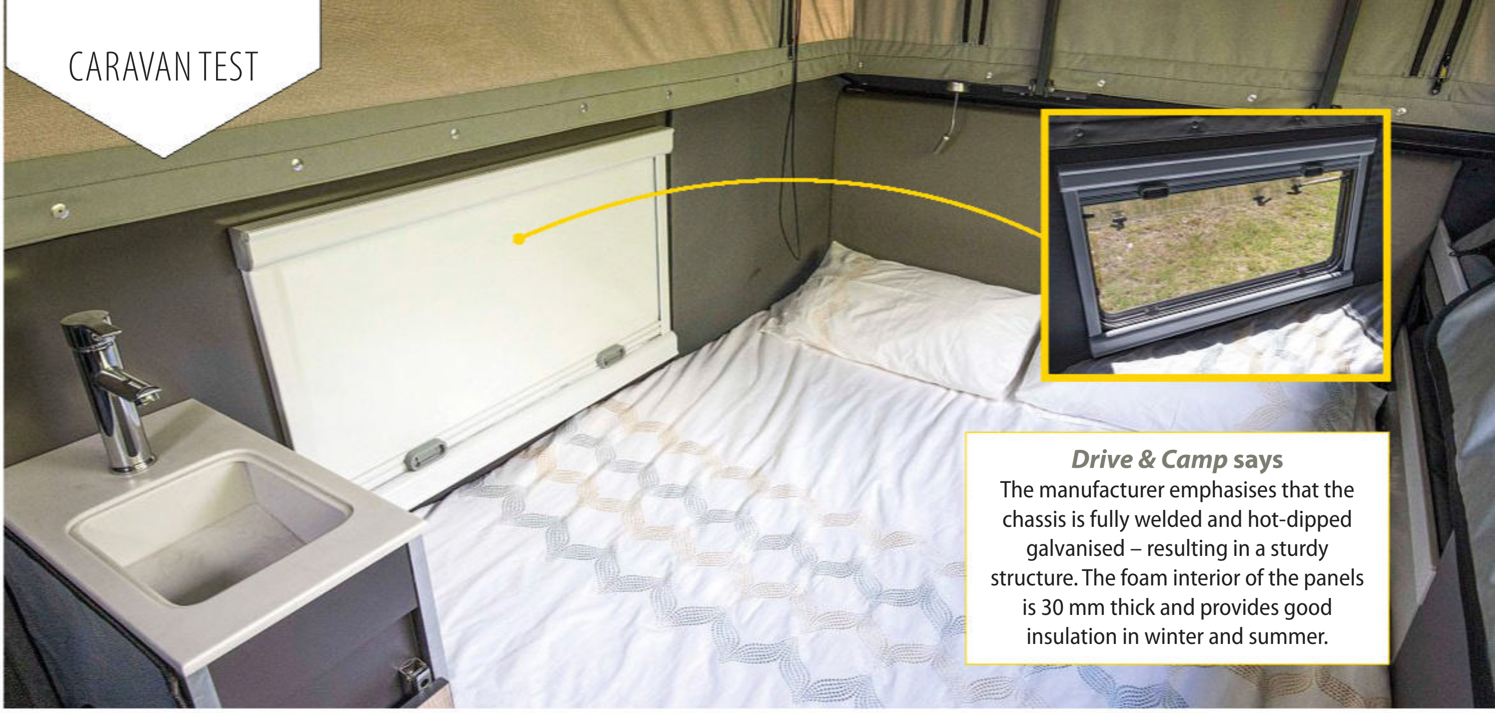
Lastly, the fridge/freezer pulls out from the front cupboard. With the tray pulled out, the fridge/freezer is next to the hull, and next to it – on the other side – is a drawer for your pots. This tray pulls out to the right, and the top of the cupboard is flat and level with the fridge/freezer. It's a practical place to put things down. A separate frame for the sinks and drying rack hooks onto the end of the fridge/freezer's slide frame. It all folds up. You get water to the sink with a separate spray head that pulls out from the hull.



Step right in

The Armadillo has two doors across from each other. The main door is on the kitchen side – on the opposite side the shower tent extends next to the door. A loose step fits under both doors. There is now an short aisle in front of you when you step through the main door. On the left are a bunch of cupboards, with the bed on the right running across the entire width.

The cupboards are more like shelves that close with canvas doors, but there's more than enough packing space for two people. A double power point is in the first cupboard, which is big enough for a microwave oven. The bed is 1 900 x 1 520 mm (king size) with a window on the left. The window can be opened, but also has a solid blind and mesh. On the right, along the entire length



Drive & Camp says

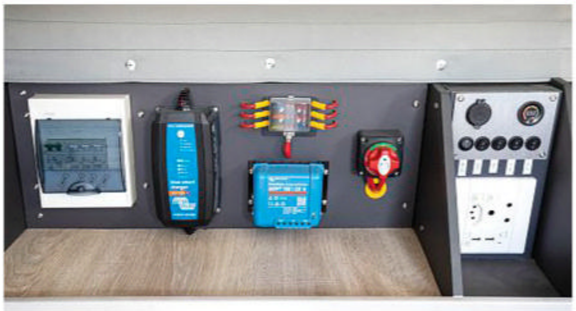
The manufacturer emphasises that the chassis is fully welded and hot-dipped galvanised – resulting in a sturdy structure. The foam interior of the panels is 30 mm thick and provides good insulation in winter and summer.

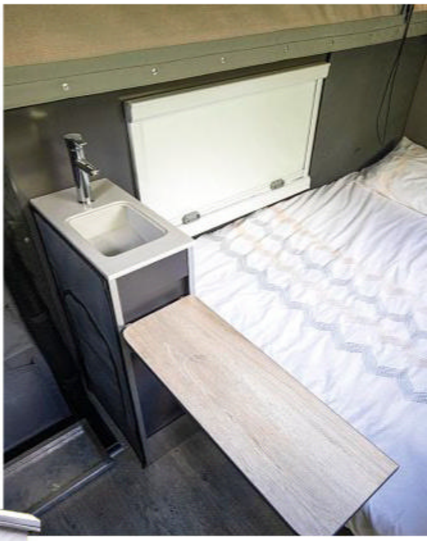
of the bed, is an open cupboard with various compartments. A power point (220 V) with space for a two and a three-prong socket and two USB ports is in the first compartment. Above it is the switches for the lights and the water pump plus a voltmeter. The main switch for the power, fuses, solar panel regulator, battery and circuit breakers is in the next compartment – you can thus see at a glance if there is an electrical problem.

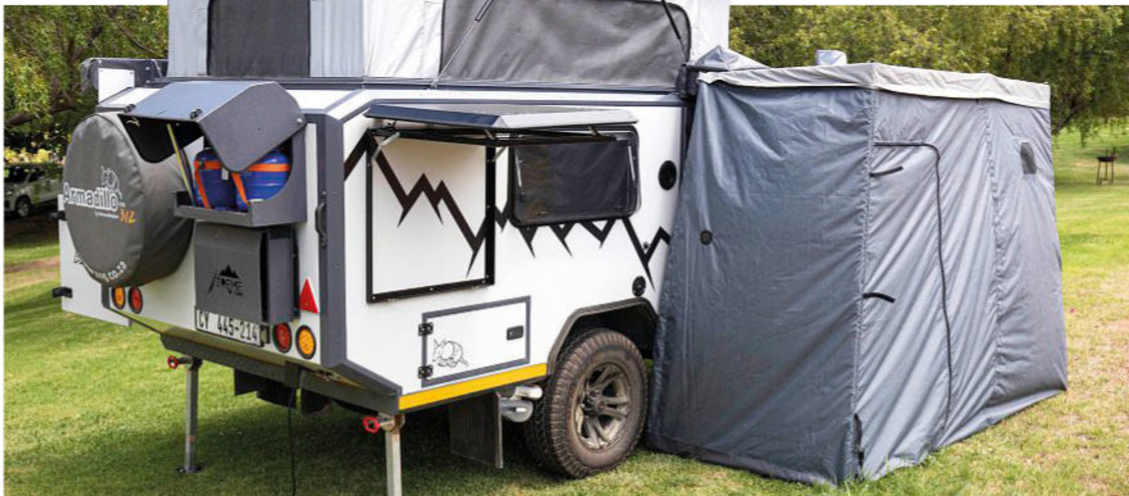
Next to the second door is a basin against the foot of the bed and a narrow counter extends from below to make room for basin. Next to it, a deep drawer pulls out from under the bed – great for storage.

As mentioned, the second door opens into the shower tent – as does the cupboard with the in-line gas geyser. This tent has two compartments: an open space where the door opens and the shower section at the end. The tent is stretched with adjustable poles and stands firm after you've anchored the canvas panels with tent pegs. One side of the tent can be zipped open if you want to exit here and not through the caravan.

A square washing line folds out at the back – also on the shower side. There is even a small roof to prevent birds from sitting on your clothes or your laundry getting wet in the rain. (Newer models have extra storage space under the washing line that extends over almost the full width of the caravan.)







Setting up

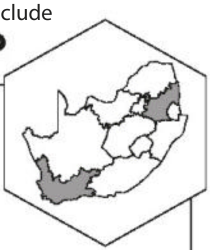
The Armadillo has a corner steady at each corner. When you lift it up, you turn the foot slightly out again until it rests against a plate. Not only does this ensure the foot doesn't swing open accidentally while driving, but it also reduces rattles if you are towing on a corrugated dirt road.

Another smart feature are two small steps on either side of the nose cone. It's just big enough for the tip of you shoe and just the right place to step to get to the hinges of lifting the roof. The roof lifts a good 610 mm.

What comes standard?

The standard equipment includes a spare wheel; 100 ℓ water tank and 50 ℓ grey-water tank (both made of stainless steel); fridge/freezer frame that can accommodate a National Luna up to 90 ℓ; two-burner gas stove; dish rack frame with dishes; several 220 V power outlets and USB ports; LEDs (outside and inside); a shower tent with shower head extension; a washing line; 160 W solar panel with Victron regulator; a Brad Harrison coupler to charge batteries while towing; a bench and table that fit when the mattress (110 mm high density foam) is folded away; plumbing; a rack inside the door which accommodates a 20 ℓ microwave oven; control panel inside for the water pump (10 ℓ/ min), voltage display, and water level; 105 Ah deep-cycle battery (lithium) with Victron charger; mesh in front of both doors; a choice between a 270° or 3,5 x 3 m awning; and two 3 kg gas cylinders and an in-line gas water heater (6 ℓ/min).

Some of the optional extras are a Thule bike rack for two on the nose cone; nose-cone protector; camping table (1 250 x 612 mm); movers; upgrade to 17" wheels; a toolbox; jerry can holder; 90 ℓ National Luna fridge/freezer; crockery; upgrade to a 108 Ah lithium battery (which can also include a Victron charger). ●



SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer	Metalian
Model	Armadillo XTR 312
Sleeps	Two
Dimensions	5,45 x 1,94 x 2,1 m
Wheels	16"
Axle	2 t
Tare weight	1 130 kg
Load capacity	770 kg
GVM	1 900 kg
Chassis	Galvanised
Hull	Double-isolated aluminium
Price	R540 000

DEALER NETWORK Sales from the factory in Cape Town as well as Sonpark Camping & Leisure in Mbombela.

Contact ☎ 021 981 2992 armadillo@metalian.co.za xog.co.za

B EB ✓ ✗ TAR DIRT 4x4 1 900kg

R540 000 ARMADILLO XTR312 GVM 1 900 kg

FROM THE COMPETITORS

Off-road caravans for two (without fold-out panels)

R589 000 AFRISPOOR WILD CAT 2 SLEEPER GVM 1 950 kg

Galvanised chassis, stainless steel and aluminium body, and 15" wheels.

R379 500 JAGUAR SABOR GVM 1 600 kg

Galvanised steel chassis and body, and 15" wheels.

R490 000 BUNDU X GVM 1 800 kg

Galvanised chassis, body made of synthetic honeycomb panels, and 15" or 16" wheels.

**Standard prices. The equipment level of models varies from manufacturer to manufacturer.*

Drive & Camp loaned the Armadillo from the manufacturer.

Smartphone or GPS?

Your smartphone has Google Maps, and you can also get navigation apps for your phone that work without cellular signal. So why would you need a GPS device?

Words **Cyril Klopper** Photos **Getty Images**

14th St NW
14th St NW
17th St NW
17th St NW
18th St NW
6th St NW
8th St NW
sylvania Ave NW
14th St SW
National Mall and Memorial Parks
World War II Memorial
Constitution Gardens
Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial
Independence Ave SW
Korean War Veterans Memorial

When we recently took delivery of a test vehicle and attached a GPS device to the windshield, the fleet manager expressed surprise, saying he hadn't seen such a device in a long time. This led to the question of why a smartphone with a navigation app isn't sufficient, prompting this article.

Those of us who travel to remote locations where cellphone signal is poor or unavailable can still benefit from dedicated GPS devices that connect more reliably and more frequently to the satellite network than a smartphone.

New smartphones indeed have a built-in GPS chip that can receive satellite signals, and there are even phones like the latest iPhone 14 that can send emergency messages via the satellite network, although this service is currently not available in South Africa.

So why would you consider a GPS device when your smartphone can do the same?

How does it work?

GPS satellites are not placed in orbit around the Earth simply for your enjoyment and convenience. They belong to the military, originally used solely by the US armed forces for their own purposes. It was only when Ronald Reagan granted public access to the satellite network in the 1980s that it became clear how much it could help economies.

Nowadays, everyone from ship captains to airplane pilots benefits from free access to the satellite network. However, the Americans can withdraw the service whenever they want, as happened in 1999 during the Kargil conflict. Other nations have subsequently established their own satellite networks.

The three largest satellite networks outside the American Global Positioning System are

Glonass (belonging to Russia), BeiDou (belonging to China), and Galileo (belonging to the European Union).

All of them use 24 satellites since that is the minimum number needed to cover the entire Earth, although some networks have a few extras on standby in case a satellite unexpectedly malfunctions.

A dedicated GPS receiver continuously listens for a time-coded message transmitted on a specific frequency by the satellite network. Each of the 24 satellites in a network has an atomic clock and transmits the precise time. The GPS receiver determines which satellites it can hear and then starts collecting those messages.

The messages include time, current satellite positions, and a few other pieces of information. The message stream is relatively slow – to save power – and since all the satellites broadcast on the same frequency, it's better that way, so your GPS device can more easily sort out the information it receives.

Due to the signal's slowness and the amount of information needed to determine your position, it can take 30-60 seconds to obtain a location on a standard GPS when you first turn it on.

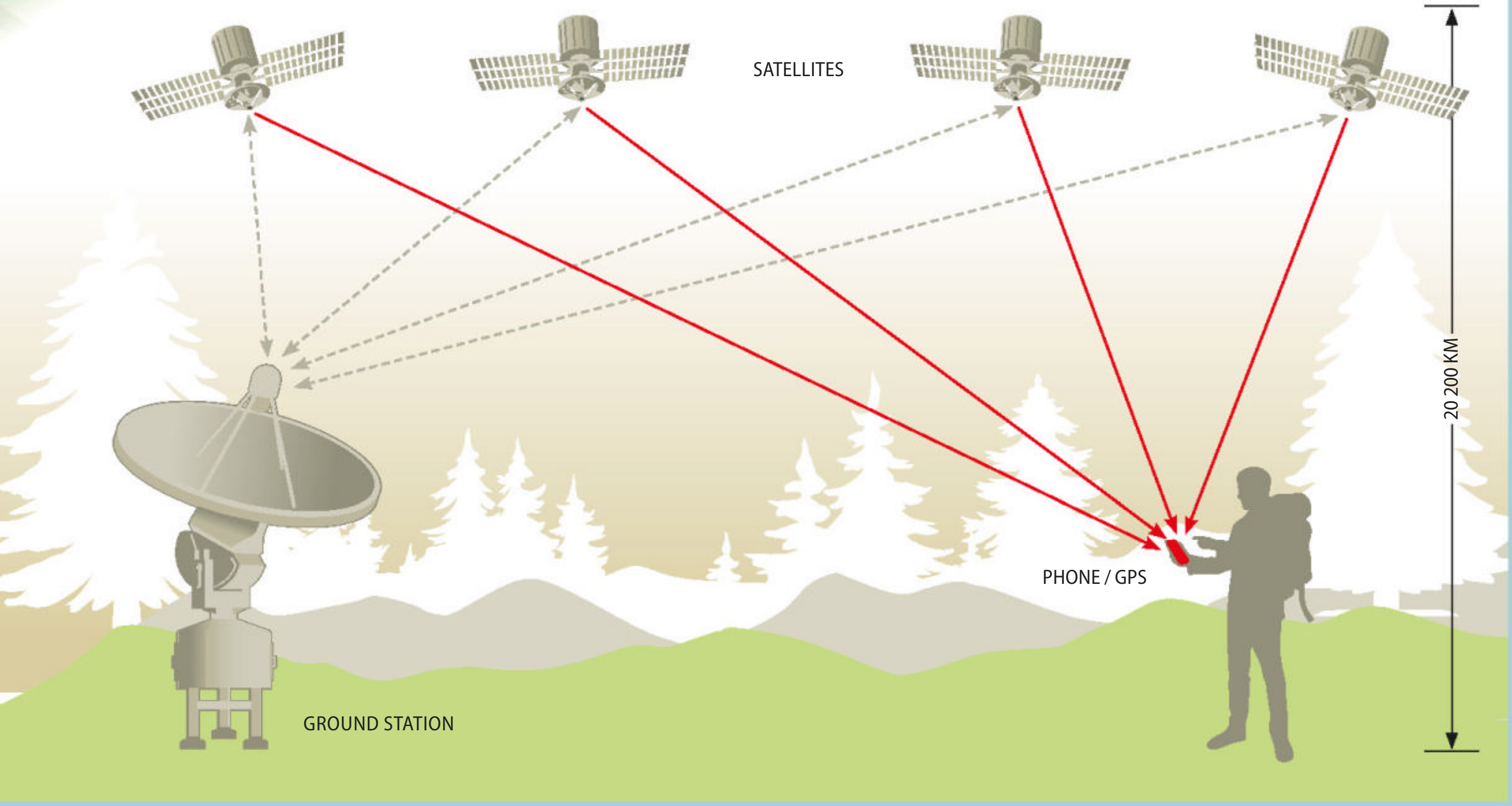
Once your GPS has the position and time code from at least three satellites, it can roughly tell you where you are on the Earth's surface. However, four satellites are needed to determine your altitude above sea level.

Modern GPS devices now receive signals not only from the American satellite network but also from Glonass and Galileo, and the extra satellites make determining your position more reliable and accurate – usually between 2 m and 90 cm depending on weather conditions. High-grade GPS devices used by surveyors and military forces are accurate up to 2 cm.

> Modern GPS devices now receive signals not only from the American satellite network but also from Glonass and Galileo, and the extra satellites make determining your position more reliable and accurate

In contrast, a smartphone uses triangulation between cell towers to roughly determine your position, but a smartphone with a built-in GPS – usually more expensive – will also occasionally listen to the satellite network's signal to get a more accurate coordinate.

A smartphone with a GPS receiver listens to only one of the above satellite networks, and even the most expensive smartphone consults the satellites only now and again to confirm your location.



GARMIN Overlander
Drive
Explore
Stop
Where To
Pitch & Roll
Track Recorder
ABC
Campgrounds
Main Menu
Map
Filter
Nxai Pan National Park
Planet Baobab

Smartphone vs GPS

You can use real topographic map information on a GPS device to warn you in advance about topographical features that can affect your journey, whether they are valleys, mountains, rivers, or farm gates. We're not talking about topographic lines on a flat map as displayed by many smartphone apps, but a true three-dimensional representation that shows exactly how the road ahead winds up and down through the mountains.

A GPS device also has a more powerful satellite signal receiver than a smartphone. Moreover, a GPS is more durable, has better battery life, replaceable batteries, and is built to withstand harsh weather. Smartphones are usually not designed for outdoor activities. Humidity, rain and knocks, and other challenges on 4x4 routes can break a phone.

Smartphone maps are always more up-to-date as they are continuously updated with the latest information. Often our GPS device indicates a road that has been recently redirected or no longer exists. In those cases, we turn to Google Maps on a smartphone to find the correct route. GPS manufacturers like Garmin do update their maps several times a year, so you won't encounter this problem often. Companies like Tracks4Africa, however, update their maps less frequently and may be years behind on the state of roads, but they are otherwise invaluable, especially if you like to visit campgrounds and attractions known only to the 4x4 community.

A smartphone can also alert you to traffic jams when it has internet access – something a GPS device cannot do without the help of a smartphone. The downside is that Google knows exactly where you are driving and what you are doing. You don't have to believe in conspiracy theories to know that Google reveals your activities to other companies. If you want to maintain your privacy, turn off the GPS function and so-called 'location sharing' on your smartphone and hope they aren't listening to your conversations and monitoring your movements anyway.

Some Garmin devices use InReach technology, which allows you to share your location with family at home via the satellite network, but only if you want them to know! You can also send and receive short text messages without a mobile signal.

A GPS device's maps are easy to read, and the screens are usually larger than those of a smartphone, so you can see more clearly how a road runs. It can also be frustrating to navigate with a smartphone when the screen is constantly filled with WhatsApp messages. Free Staters who need to make a critical decision about which turn-off to take at the Giloolies interchange in Johannesburg don't want a navigation app interrupted by an incoming call. In contrast, a dedicated GPS focuses on the road ahead and nothing else.

As you've seen on our gear pages (go to page 92), you can now also program your trailer combination's length and height into a GPS, and the device will then suggest which roads you should take or avoid.

Conclusion

Your smartphone has already replaced the average person's camera and now threatens to eliminate your GPS device as well. However, a smartphone will never replace a serious photographer's camera, just as a camera never replaced the art of painting.

The smartphone may have replaced the average person's GPS device, but adventurers who travel to unknown destinations and want to make spontaneous changes to their routes will still benefit from a GPS device for a long time.

PLANNING YOUR NEXT ROAD TRIP?

Grab our latest guide for some of the most epic routes in South Africa!

go! Drive&Camp
ROUTES THAT ROCK
2023
11 epic road trips in Southern Africa
Camp your way through the north and south
80+ mountain passes for overlanders
GPS CO-ORDINATES | PIT STOPS | HISTORY
R125 (including VAT)
Namibia N$125

On shelf now

Namibian route guide available in October

App-venture alert!

We review four navigation apps for your smartphone and seven new GPS devices, plus one tried-and-tested older model.

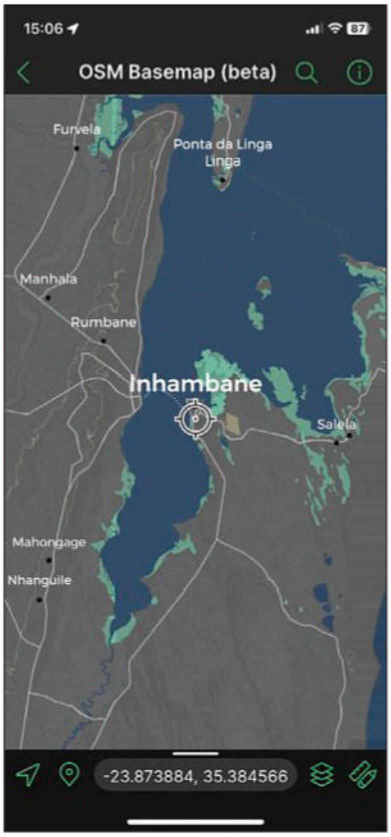
Words **Cyril Klopper** Photos **Supplied and Getty Images**

Smartphones are smarter than ever, almost replacing SLR cameras and GPS devices… almost. However, GPS devices still have their place, and of the three big brands: Magellan, TomTom, and Garmin, only Garmin is widely available in South Africa. We are therefore limited to discussing this brand's range of GPS devices. We also uploaded eight navigation apps on a smartphone and list the four that work the best.

GET YOURS HERE

Google Play **App Store** **outdoorwarehouse.co.za** **4x4megaworld.co.za** **navworld.co.za**

Prices were correct at the time of printing, but they can change. Always visit a supplier's website or an app store to get the latest prices.


15:06
OSM Basemap (beta)
Furvela
Ponta da Linga Linga
Manhala
Rumbane
Inhambane
Salela
Mahongage
Nhanguile
-23.873884, 35.384566

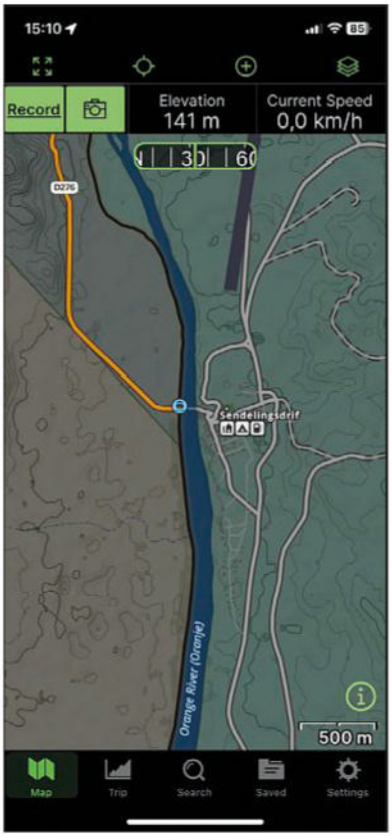
AVENZA

Trailblazing terrain

This app's free base map looks excellent, and if you want more detailed maps with specific information, you can download them from Avenza's website. Some maps are free, but most are not. The app can record your route so you can see where you've driven later, and your phone's GPS receiver will show your position on the app's map even if you have no cellular reception. The app is more geared towards hikers as it indicates compass direction, but it does not navigate street by street.

Size 191,6 MB

Price Free from Google Play and App Store


15:10
Record
Elevation
141 m
Current Speed
0,0 km/h
30
60
Sendelingsdrif
Orange River (Oranje)
500 m
Map
Trip
Search
Saved
Settings

GAIA GPS

Off-the-grid guide

Gaia GPS is easier to use than the Avenza app mentioned previously, but the functionality is the same. You can record your route, determine your position without mobile signal, but the app won't calculate your route without cell signal. The app is free, but if you want better maps and the app to guide you along your route without cell signal, you'll have to pay R570 a year for the fully functional version of the app.

Size 121,6 MB

Price Free from Google Play and App Store

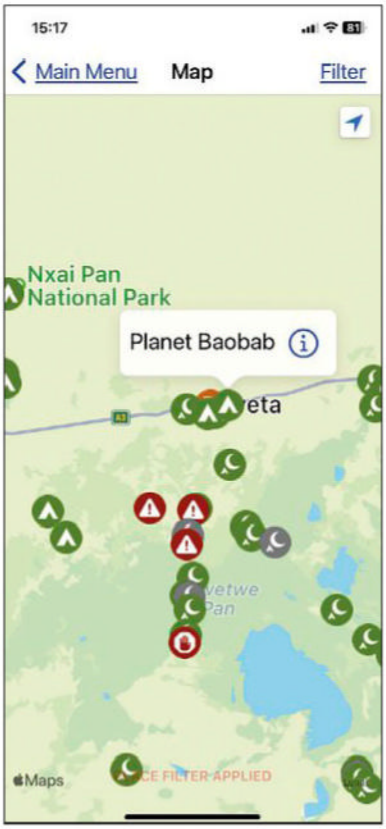
iOVERLANDER

Wanderlust database

This app is not really intended for navigation purposes, although it will indeed show your position on a map – without cellular signal. The reason why this app is so popular is its database of campsites, petrol stations, mechanics, embassies and everything world travellers need. Users review places and share their photos. For example, if you have never been to Chibemba, Angola, the app will show you when someone last went there and what their experience was.

Size 396,9 MB

Price Free from Google Play and App Store


15:17
Main Menu
Map
Filter
Nxai Pan National Park
Planet Baobab
eta
etwe Pan
Maps
CE FILTER APPLIED

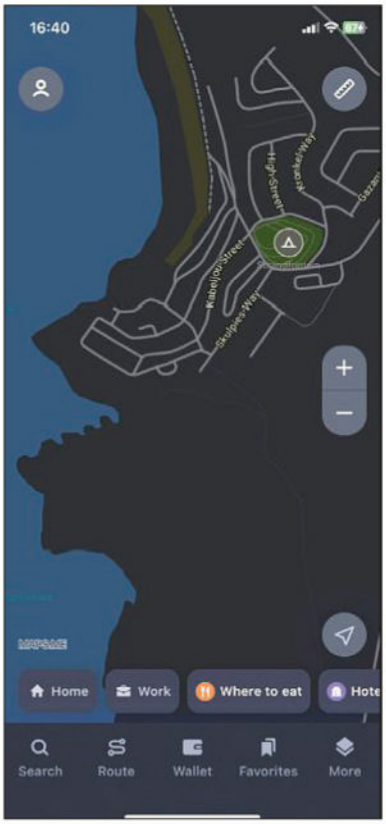
MAP.ME

Wayfinding wonder

After iOverlander, this is our favourite app – and more than 140 million users worldwide agree with us. It almost replaces a dedicated GPS, almost, but it still falls a bit short. You can plan your route with it, share your route with friends, and it even remembers where you parked your vehicle. It's free, but it's full of ads. If you get sick and tired of the ads, you can pay $3.49 (around R65) annually to disable them.

Size 305 MB

Price Free from Google Play and App Store


16:40
Home
Work
Where to eat
Hote
Search
Route
Wallet
Favorites
More

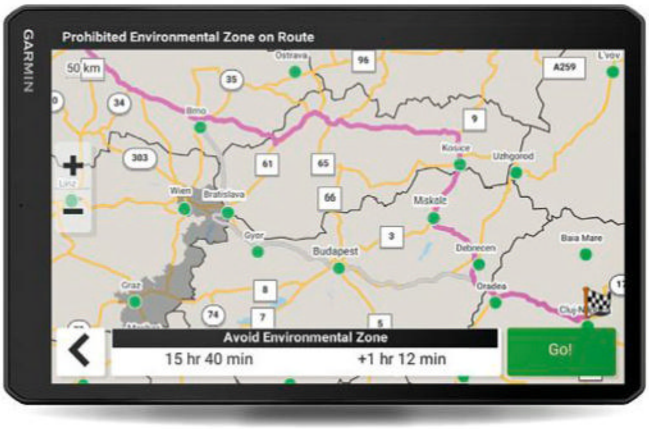
GARMIN
Recording
GARMIN 04/11/2022 10:43:36 AM 38.86776 -94.80005 45 MPH

GARMIN CAMPERCAM 795

The watcher

This GPS comes with a built-in forward-facing camera (dashcam), and you can mount a second camera in the rear window of your caravan for safe reversing. Enter your caravan's dimensions and weight, and the GPS will take them into account when planning your route to avoid getting stuck. It's also loaded with campsite coordinates, and when connected to your mobile phone, it will alert you about upcoming traffic and weather conditions.

Screen 15,2 x 8,9 cm
Resolution 1 024 x 600 pixels
Physical size 17,7 (w) x 10,6 (h) x 3,5 cm (d)
Weight 271 g
Battery life 30 minutes
Price R12 700 at navworld.co.za


GARMIN
Prohibited Environmental Zone on Route
50 km
Brno
Wien
Bratislava
Budapest
Miskolc
Debrecen
Kosice
Uzhgorod
Oradea
Baia Mare
Graz
Gyor
Avoid Environmental Zone
15 hr 40 min
+1 hr 12 min
Go!

GARMIN DĒZL LGV 1010

The big rig navigator

This massive device is actually designed for truck drivers, but it works great for large 4x4 motorhomes like an Iveco Daily or a Mercedes-Benz Actros. You can program your vehicle's dimensions, and your route will be planned accordingly. The large screen makes it easy to see your route. As the software is written for trucks, the GPS will occasionally remind you to stop and take a breather, something that's definitely applicable to you as well.

Screen 21,7 x 13,5 cm
Resolution 1 280 x 800 pixels
Physical size 24,5 (w) x 13,5 (h) x 2,1 cm (d)
Weight 554 g
Battery life Two hours
Price R19 200 at navworld.co.za

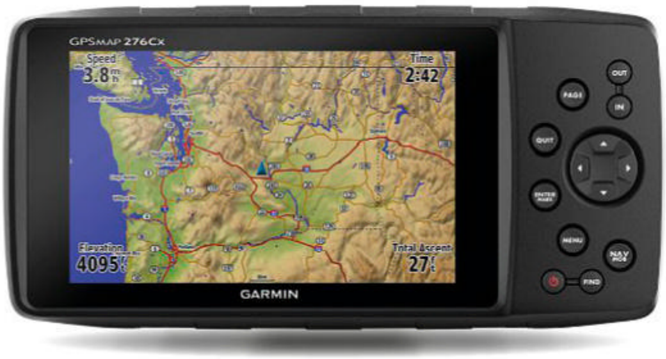
Ricerca
Tartufotto
5.9km
Via Cusani, Milano, MI
1012 commenti
SE
Osteria Concetta
7.3km
Via Concetta 8, Milano, MI
1030 commenti
SE
Vai!
Valutazione viaggiatori TripAdvisor
GARMIN

GARMIN DRIVE 52MT-S

The commuter's companion

This GPS connects to your smartphone to monitor traffic conditions and plan the optimal route for you. It also uses travel agency TripAdvisor's information to recommend restaurants and accommodations along your route. It's an affordable device with all the basic functions you need, but its short battery life requires it to stay plugged into your vehicle's 12 V socket. Some smartphones with navigation apps do outperform this device.

Screen 11,1 x 6,3 cm
Resolution 480 x 272 pixels
Physical size 14 (w) x 8,4 (h) x 2 cm (d)
Weight 170,8 g
Battery life One hour
Price R2 600 at Outdoor Warehouse


GPSMAP 276Cx
Speed
3.8
Time
2:42
Elevation
4095
Total Ascent
27
GARMIN
OUT
PAGE
IN
QUIT
ENTER
MENU
NAV
FIND

GARMIN GPSMAP 276CX

The rugged route finder

If you're not a fan of touchscreens, the 276 series with its physical buttons will likely satisfy you. It's teasingly referred to as the 'fish finder' as it is indeed used on boats (although it can't actually detect fish), but 4x4 enthusiasts love it for its ruggedness and ease of use. It's old technology, but fans swear up and down that it's Garmin's best GPS ever. We use this GPS ourselves to record our routes for travel articles.

Screen 11,2 x 6,8 cm
Resolution 800 x 480 pixels
Physical size 19,1 (w) x 9,4 (h) x 4,4 cm (d)
Weight 450 g
Battery life 16 hours
Price R12 300 at Outdoor Warehouse

inReach MINI
OK
Reply
GARMIN

Emergency, need you to send help.

Rescue on the way. ETA 2 hrs.

GARMIN INREACH MINI

The message maven

Alright, we're bending the rules a bit with this one as it won't help you navigate. For R250 per month, you can send and receive 10 text messages from almost anywhere on Earth via the Iridium satellite network. You can also share your position via satellite with your family or Facebook and request a weather forecast. There's a pricier package at R1 070 per month that offers many more communication options, and you only need to sign up for one month at a time.

Screen 2,3 x 2,3 cm
Resolution 128 x 128 pixels
Physical size 5,2 (w) x 9,9 (h) x 2,60 cm (d)
Weight 100 g
Battery life 90 hours
Price R7 000 at Outdoor Warehouse

GARMIN MONTANA 700i

The tenacious tracker

Marketed to hikers, it's especially popular among adventure motorcyclists, and its screen is large enough for use in your car. Like the InReach Mini, you can subscribe to the satellite network to send and receive messages, contact emergency rescue services, and share your position with others. The battery life is 18 hours under normal use, but it can last up to 330 hours in expedition mode if you need to leave your vehicle and seek help on foot.

Screen 6,5 x 10,8 cm
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Physical size 9,2 (w) x 18,3 (h) x 3,2 cm (d)
Weight 410 g
Battery life 18 hours
Price R14 000 at navworld.co.za

10:10
MONTANA 700i
GARMIN

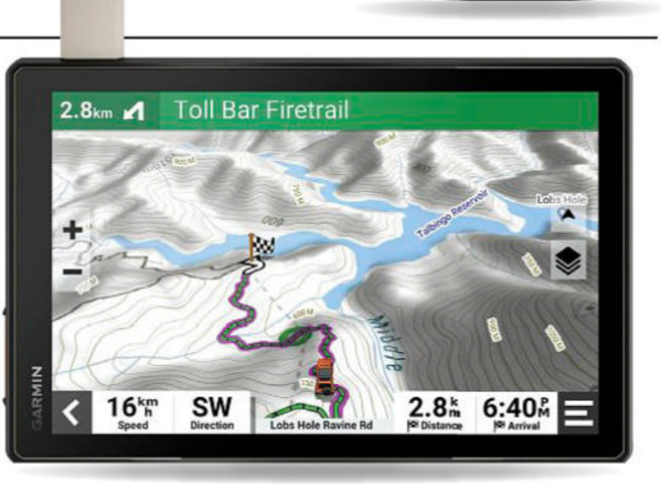
GARMIN Overlander
Travel Trailer
Car
Trailer
Travel Trailer
27' 6"
8' 6"
8'
7,500 lb
Select

GARMIN OVERLANDER

The intrepid adventurer

As the name suggests, the Overlander is designed for long-distance journeys to far-flung destinations. It's built to 810 military standards with an IP5X dust rating. The adventurers' favourite app, iOverlander, comes preloaded, and the device receives not only GPS signals from American satellites but also the European Galileo and Russian Glonass satellite networks. You can program your tow combination's length, height, and width, and the GPS will alert you to upcoming low bridges and tight turns.

Screen 15,2 x 8,9 cm
Resolution 1 024 x 600 pixels
Physical size 19,9 (w) x 12,2 (h) x 2,4 cm (d)
Weight 437 g
Battery life Three hours
Price R13 500 at Outdoor Warehouse



GARMIN TREAD XL

The tour guide

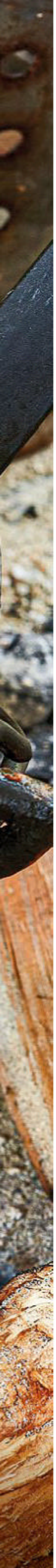
This massive device comes preloaded with topographic maps for Africa and Tracks4Africa. You can enter your expedition vehicle or tow combination's dimensions to get alerts about potential obstacles on your route. The most intriguing feature is the so-called Group Ride. If everyone in your convoy has the same GPS, you can see each other on a map. A cheaper alternative is for everyone to have a Group Ride Tracker (R4 000) in their vehicle, and then the tour leader can see where everyone is.

Screen 21,7 x 13,5 cm
Resolution 1 280 x 800 pixels
Physical size 25,2 (w) x 19,9 (h) x 3,1 cm (d)
Weight 930 g
Battery life One hour
Price R26 000 at 4x4 Mega World ●

Potjie magic

Our beloved potjie is the original one-pot meal, and these six recipes are scrumptious and perfect for the campsite.

Recipes and styling **Johané Neilson** Photos **Ed O'Riley**



PAPRIKA BEEF POTJIE

Seeing red!

This potjie is a royal feast. Remember to make enough rice to mop up all that delicious sauce.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 1 kg beef short rib, sliced
- 2 tablespoons flour
- salt and black pepper to taste
- BBQ spice mix, your favourite
- olive oil for shallow frying
- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 3 large onions, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 thumb fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 ½ cups stock
- 1 tin (400g) tomatoes
- 500g passata sauce
- 750 g baby potatoes
- 500g green beans, halved
- 1 cup Greek yoghurt or sour cream

Here's how

1 Coat the meat in the flour and season generously with salt and pepper. Add a pinch or two of your favourite BBQ spice mix (mine includes equal parts ground coriander and cumin) to taste. Fry the meat until well browned in the oil, working in batches and topping up the oil as needed. Remove from the potjie.

2 In the same potjie, fry the onions until glossy. Stir in the garlic, ginger and paprika, and mix well. Add the stock, tomatoes and passata to the pot.

3 Transfer the meat back into the potjie, cover, and simmer gently for two hours or until the meat starts to soften. Longer is better, but that also depends on how hungry you are.

4 Add the potatoes, ensuring they are covered with liquid. Place the beans on top, close the lid, and simmer for another hour or until the potatoes are soft. You can halve the baby potatoes if you prefer or cut larger potatoes into smaller pieces.

5 Simmer the potjie uncovered until the sauce has reduced to your liking. Stir in the yoghurt, taste if you need more salt, and serve with rice.

***Drive & Camp* says** **If, like me, you enjoy a hint of sweetness with tomato dishes, add a teaspoon of sugar at the end of the cooking time along with the yoghurt.**

CURRY CHICKEN AND RICE

Clucking good curry

This delicious potjie is the creation of my sister-in-law, Liezl van Schalkwyk, and a huge family favourite, whether we're home or camping. With few ingredients and only one pot to wash up after dinner, the taste isn't all that counts in this dish!

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 3 large chicken breasts with skin and bone (at least 600g)
- 2 tablespoons oil for shallow frying
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- salt and black pepper to taste
- 1½ cups hot water (use your judgement)
- 400g mixed vegetables (we use ready-cut pumpkin, cauliflower, baby marrows and sweet potato)
- 1 cup jasmine rice
- 1 sachet (200ml) butter chicken Coat & Cook sauce (Ina Paarman's is top-notch)

Here's how

1 Brown the chicken in oil in a potjie over coals. Season generously with salt and pepper.

2 Add the onions and fry for another few minutes. Add enough water to just cover the chicken, lower the heat, and simmer for about 1 hour until the chicken is tender.

3 Add the vegetables to the chicken and simmer for about 15 minutes. Stir in the rice, top up the liquid with boiling water if it doesn't seem enough, and let the potjie simmer until the vegetables and rice are soft. Usually another 20-30 minutes.

4 Stir the potjie, the chicken should be tender enough to shred by itself. Now add the butter chicken sauce, mix everything together, and serve.

***Drive & Camp* says** **This potjie recipe easily doubles, and you can play with the combination of vegetables. Sliced green beans and broccoli also work well in this dish.**

POTJIE PUDDING

Almost instant indulgence

For me, the most important part of a pudding potjie is making sure the flat-bottomed potjie you're baking in is sparkling clean and that there's enough sauce to moisten it. Take a shortcut with a premix, so you don't have to think too hard about the quantities of delicate baking in the wilderness and remember your whisk (balloon or electric).

Ingredients

(serves 8)

- 1 vanilla-flavoured cake premix (We used Ina Paarman's)
- Consult your packaging, we needed: 3 eggs, ½ cup oil, ¼ cup melted butter, 1 cup milk, grated zest of 1 lemon (optional)

SAUCE

- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup coffee (or hot water if you prefer)
- 1 tablespoon butter

Here's how

1 Whisk together the eggs, oil, and butter for 30 seconds at high speed. An electric whisk or even a hand blender will help a lot, although you can prove your muscle endurance with a balloon whisk if you must.

2 Add the milk and whisk again until combined. Stir in the contents of your cake mix and the lemon zest and fold together until just combined.

3 Spoon the batter into a greased flat-bottomed potjie (we used a size 3), put the lid on, and 'bake' over moderate coals with extra coals on the lid for 45 minutes or until a knife point comes out clean when you press it into the middle of the cake. Ideally, don't lift the lid before 30 minutes have elapsed, or the cake may collapse in the middle. I find the cooking time outdoors is slightly longer than in the oven, so enjoy the anticipation for a few more minutes before peeking.

4 Melt together all the sauce ingredients, ready for pouring.

5 Poke holes all over the cooked cake with the back of a wooden spoon and immediately pour the hot sauce over it so it can soak in well. Ta-da!

***Drive & Camp* says** **Stir a tablespoon of vinegar into the milk to make buttermilk. If lemon and coffee aren't your cup of tea, you can, of course, stick to plain vanilla or add a splash of your favourite liqueur to the sauce (against the cold, of course).**

BROWN ONION SOUP BREAD

S(o)uper trouper

Take a shortcut with store-bought bread dough, but of course, you can knead your own. The soup powder and cream create the most delicious outer layer for the bread rolls.

Ingredients

(serves 8 as a side dish)

- Butter, for greasing
- 1 quantity of store-bought bread dough (about 800g)
- 1 ½ cups long-life cream
- 1packet (55g) brown onion soup powder
- 1 onion, sliced into rings

Here's how

1 Grease a flat-bottomed potjie with butter – or use oil if you prefer.

2 Shape the dough into golf ball-sized balls and arrange, preferably in a single layer, in the prepared potjie.

3 Whisk together the cream and onion soup powder and pour over the balls. Cover the potjie and allow to rise for 20 minutes while you get the coals ready.

4 Arrange the sliced onion rings on top of the risen bread balls, cover the potjie again. Now bake the bread for about 50-60 minutes (or until risen and cooked) over moderate coals – don't forget to place a few coals on the lid.

***Drive & Camp* says** **Drizzle any remaining cream from the cup you whisked it in over the cooked bread and admire your masterpiece before serving.**

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CABBAGE MEATBALLS WITH TOMATO

Rollin' with cabbage

This comfort food is a personal favourite, and when prepared in a potjie over coals with a tomato twist, it gains an extra tasty kick without breaking the bank.

Ingredients

(serves 4-6)

- 1 thick slice of white bread, crumbed
- ½ cup milk
- 1 kg mince meat
- 1 teaspoon each meat spices and mixed herbs
- salt and white pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons each butter and olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh garlic
- 1 tin (400g) chopped tomatoes
- 1 fresh or dried bay leaf
- ½ cup meat stock
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 2 small cabbages, leaves separated and blanched
- nutmeg to taste

Here's how

1 Soak the bread in the milk until soft. Mix the bread, spices and herbs into the mince meat. Season to taste with salt and pepper and shape into meatballs, about 18.

2 Melt the butter and oil in a flat-bottomed potjie and brown the meatballs on the outside. Remove the meatballs and fry the onion in the remaining fat until glossy. Add a little more oil if needed.

3 Stir the garlic into the potjie and braai for another minute. Mix in the flour. Now add the tomatoes, bay leaf and stock, and allow the sauce simmer while wrapping the meatballs in the cabbage leaves.

4 Wrap the browned meatballs in the blanched cabbage leaves and place them in the tomato sauce in the potjie. Season with nutmeg and simmer covered for about 20 minutes. Remove the lid and simmer for another 10 minutes or until the sauce has reduced to your liking. Serve with mashed potatoes or rice.

***Drive & Camp* says** **I like to top the finished dish with a few knobs of real butter for richness and serve chutney alongside for a touch of sweetness. I love how the meatballs peek out from the small cabbage leaves in the potjie, but you can, of course, use larger leaves if you prefer.**

EASY MAC-AND-CHEESE

Cheesy comfort classic

This pasta potjie is so easy; you don't even need to make a white sauce. Keep a close eye on it, though, as the milk boils over very easily.

Ingredients

(serves 4-6)

- 1 litre milk
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 300g macaroni or penne pasta
- 1 fresh or dried bay leaf
- 2 cups grated cheese (or more if you like)
- a knob of butter (optional)
- salt and pepper to taste

Here's how

1 Boil the milk and stock together in a potjie. Stir in the pasta and bay leaf and cook for 8-10 minutes or until the pasta is al dente. It takes slightly longer in the milk, so taste it if you're unsure and stir regularly to prevent the pasta from clumping or boiling over.

2 Stir in the cheese and watch a luxurious cheese sauce form before your eyes. Add the knob of butter, season with salt and pepper, and serve with – or without – crispy bacon and pan-fried cherry tomatoes.

***Drive & Camp* says** **The sauce thickens even more if left to stand for a while. You can play with the types of cheese you use; a bit of sharp cheddar or Parmesan adds more flavour than a regular yellow cheese, but a soft Gouda or even processed cheese will melt into strings. Experiment with different combinations.**

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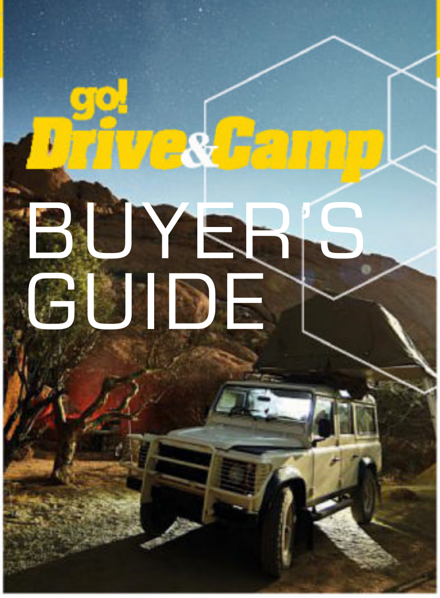

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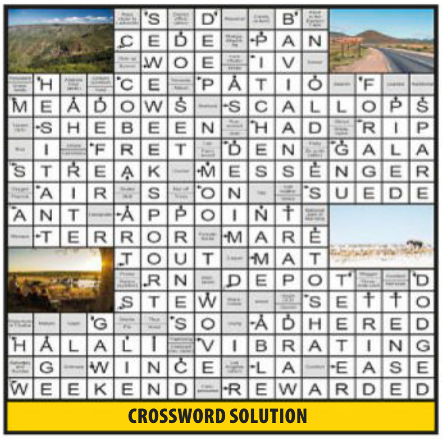

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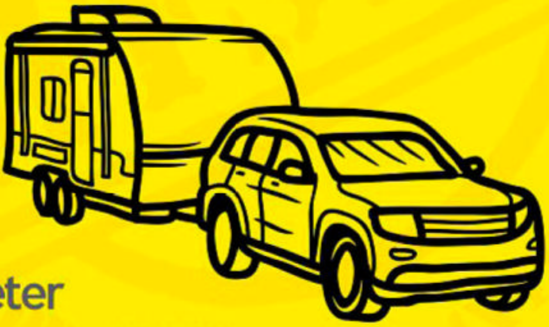

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REVIEW

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I have been with REAM/ TUFFSTUFF for about 10 years now, they insure almost everything I own, including the rubberizing in my bakkie!! Their service is out of this world, policy changes/additions are done within 15 minutes, claims are handled professionally and quickly. I would highly recommend them to anyone wanting great service from a proper insurance broker.

-ANDRE R-

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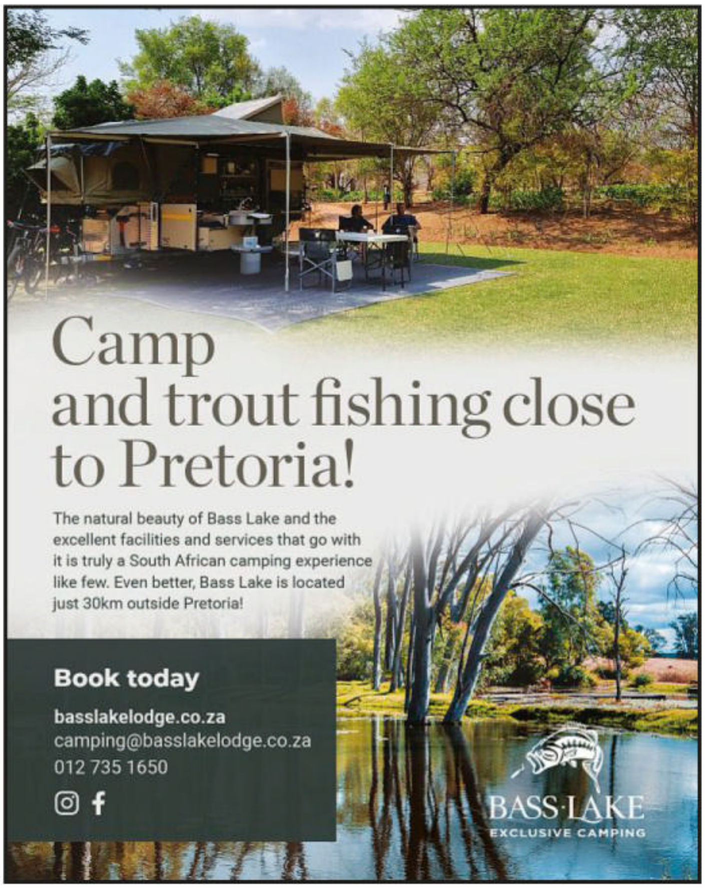

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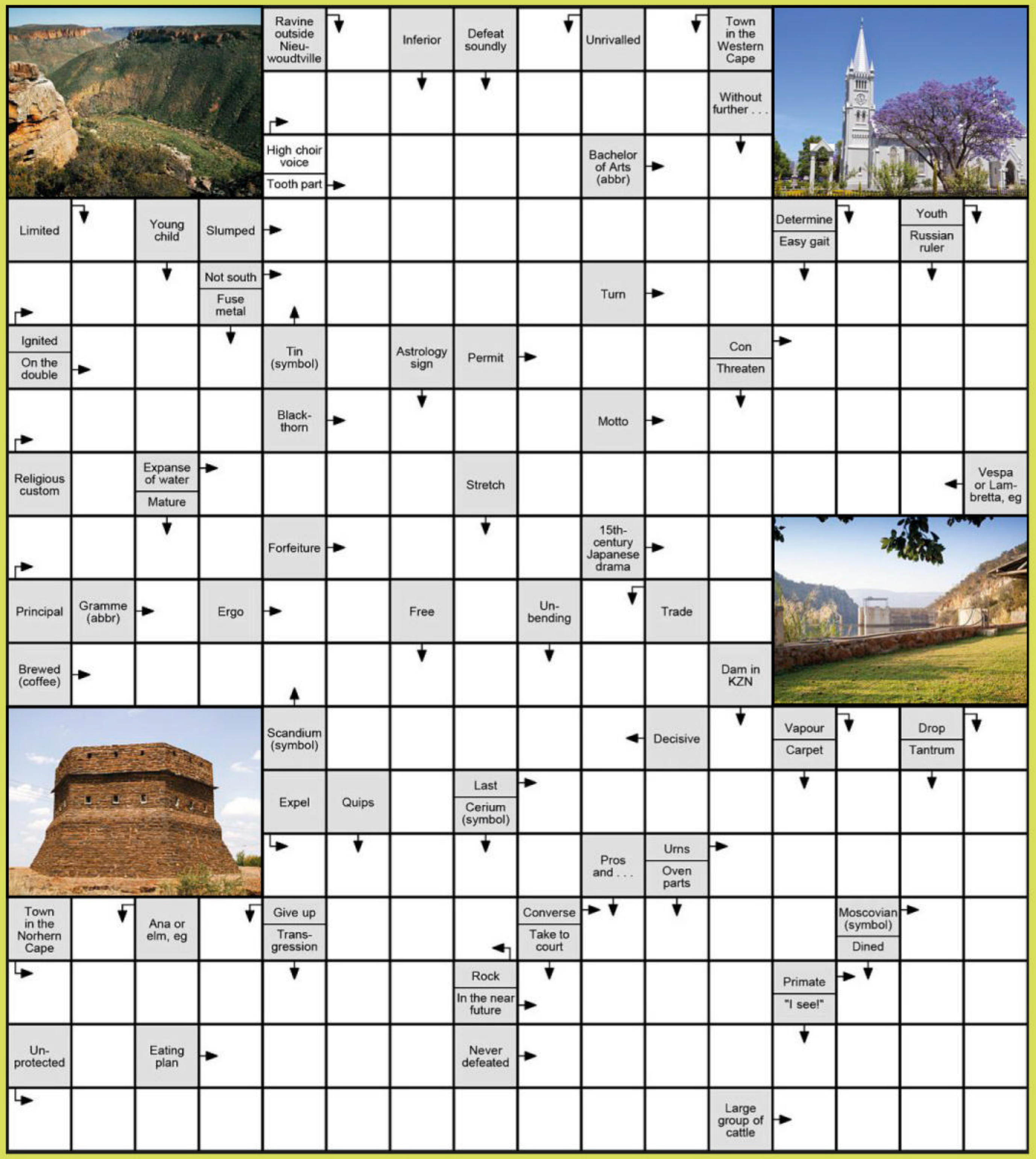
CROSSWORD

Elna Kluyts from Heidelberg in the Western Cape has won a **cooler bag worth R220** for her correct entry in our February-March 2023 issue. You can win too. Complete this crossword puzzle and e-mail a picture to **drivecamp@gomag.co.za** with your contact details. The last issue's solution is on p 106.



Ravine outside Nieu-woudtville
Inferior
Defeat soundly
Unrivalled
Town in the Western Cape
Without further . . .
High choir voice
Tooth part
Bachelor of Arts (abbr)
Limited
Young child
Slumped
Determine
Easy gait
Youth
Russian ruler
Not south
Fuse metal
Turn
Ignited
On the double
Tin (symbol)
Astrology sign
Permit
Con
Threaten
Black-thorn
Motto
Religious custom
Expanse of water
Mature
Stretch
Vespa or Lam-bretta, eg
Forfeiture
15th-century Japanese drama
Principal
Gramme (abbr)
Ergo
Free
Un-bending
Trade
Brewed (coffee)
Dam in KZN
Scandium (symbol)
Decisive
Vapour
Carpet
Drop
Tantrum
Expel
Quips
Last
Cerium (symbol)
Pros and . . .
Urns
Oven parts
Town in the Norhern Cape
Ana or elm, eg
Give up
Trans-gression
Converse
Take to court
Moscovian (symbol)
Dined
Rock
In the near future
Primate
"I see!"
Un-protected
Eating plan
Never defeated
Large group of cattle

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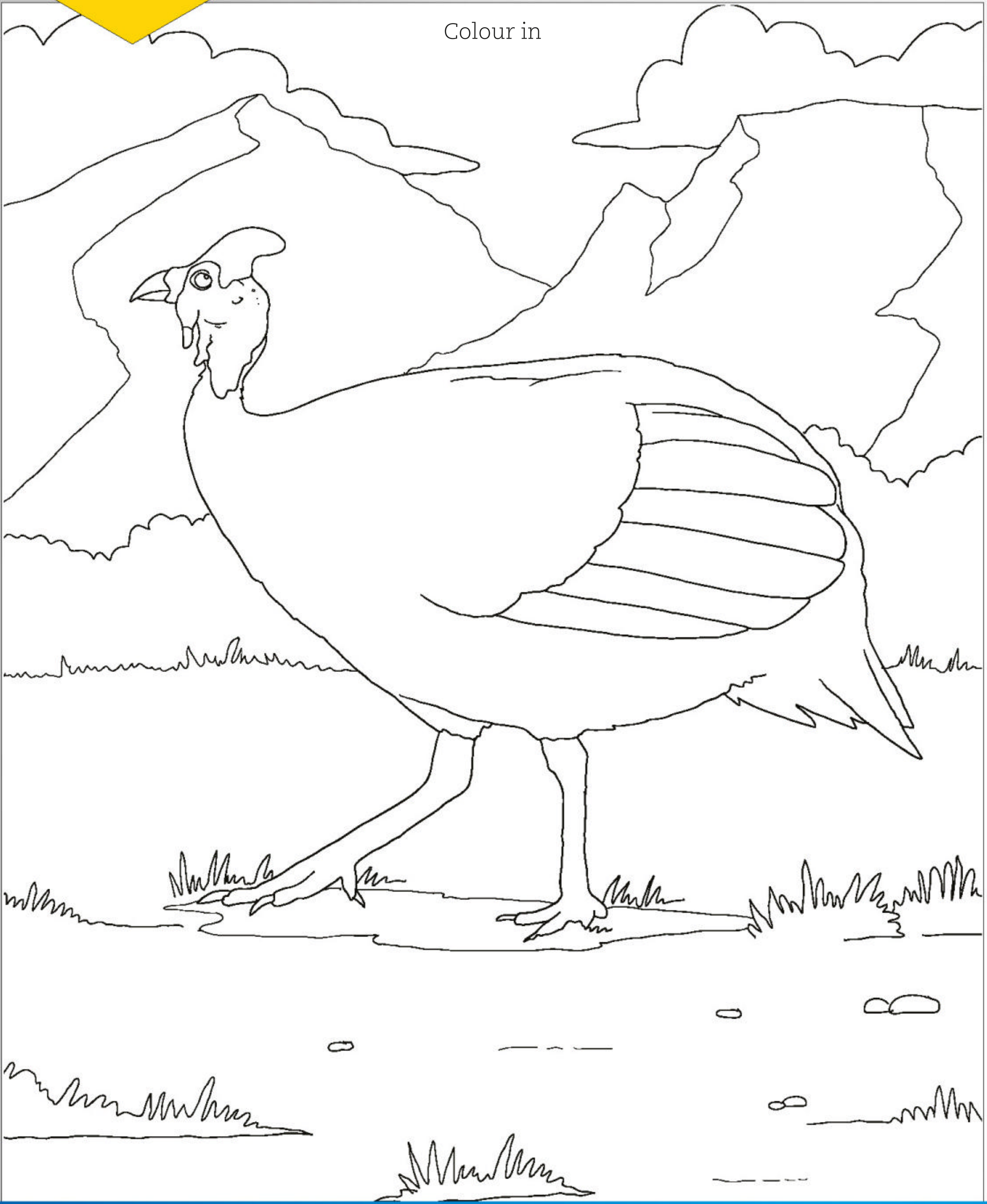
Win a cooler bag worth R220!

Whether you're a camper, fisherman, or sports fan next to a cricket pitch, this cooler bag has room for a lunch box and a 1,5 ℓ cooldrink bottle. The lid also has space for a coffee flask.

The interior is lined with PVC, which makes it easy to keep this bag clean and hygenic. The bag has a short strap that reaches over the top and attaches with a Velcro strip, and also a longer shoulder strap if you're going to carry it over longer distances. It's an ideal picnic accessory or a padkos bag for a road trip.

winkel.weg.co.za

Colour in



COLOUR IN
Get your crayons and colouring pencils out and bring life to this line drawing.

WORD SEARCH
Search for the hidden words in the list and tick them off as you find them.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES
There are at least 10 differences between the two illustrations. See if you can find them all!

MAZE
Show the maze who's boss. Remember to first do it in pencil, just in case you make a mistake.

Word search

S	T	E	N	D	A	I	M	T	A	W	A	R	I	R	A	O	V	B	B	B	S
C	O	Q	N	O	F	C	H	E	S	T	E	R	W	I	L	L	I	A	M	S	I
H	A	A	Z	U	B	U	D	H	J	B	Y	B	K	C	D	R	X	J	D	Y	Y
A	X	Z	I	L	O	K	G	O	L	Y	F	L	R	V	H	C	C	E	P	V	A
L	W	B	J	C	L	N	Z	O	A	O	T	Q	D	R	D	Y	S	E	P	E	K
K	I	W	X	C	Y	M	K	Y	D	U	L	J	K	Z	B	U	S	Q	Q	N	O
B	E	S	I	Q	P	N	W	G	W	V	U	V	J	O	H	N	S	M	I	T	L
U	M	Y	K	Y	I	J	E	A	N	D	E	V	I	L	L	I	E	R	S	D	I
R	U	Z	O	L	Q	B	G	Q	Q	S	P	D	D	G	P	F	C	W	U	T	S
G	N	Z	S	Z	T	A	I	E	S	J	L	T	R	V	T	G	I	G	K	D	I
E	U	E	E	C	H	Y	I	E	X	A	H	I	Q	I	M	D	R	W	M	O	W
R	H	O	C	R	O	D	K	J	G	Z	E	B	P	Q	Z	S	V	M	F	R	O
C	U	O	Q	I	L	T	C	J	O	E	L	S	T	R	A	N	S	K	Y	Q	Y
P	E	R	C	Y	M	O	N	T	G	O	M	E	R	Y	X	B	C	C	J	C	V
C	J	V	B	D	N	Y	R	F	J	N	A	B	J	H	K	R	K	P	L	S	Y
S	H	T	R	A	T	E	J	R	A	X	I	M	N	G	R	Y	P	J	D	Z	F
V	G	R	P	H	C	B	P	A	D	H	A	Z	B	A	Z	A	B	G	L	W	R
D	Y	H	O	U	H	E	P	N	O	J	O	A	N	M	C	N	S	W	M	P	A
A	A	C	A	M	X	N	I	C	L	G	W	V	O	V	L	H	E	P	X	C	N
N	Z	C	M	Z	C	E	E	O	X	F	Q	C	L	V	E	A	X	M	F	I	C
I	A	D	S	W	B	T	T	I	D	W	C	E	J	A	D	B	X	C	Y	H	O
E	Q	A	T	B	N	Z	E	S	A	V	J	E	A	R	Z	A	C	H	L	D	I
G	L	L	S	T	A	E	R	S	X	R	E	T	B	R	S	N	V	Y	Q	G	S
E	E	L	Z	B	C	B	S	T	Q	X	Z	Q	U	U	I	A	L	I	N	W	P
R	D	B	H	A	O	E	E	E	M	A	R	K	A	N	D	R	E	W	S	D	I
B	E	K	O	N	X	T	N	Y	O	M	O	M	J	X	J	D	D	M	D	F	E
E	M	P	O	L	W	H	H	N	Q	T	X	N	O	G	G	M	D	R	A	D	N
R	V	I	C	T	O	R	M	A	T	F	I	E	L	D	M	J	Q	H	A	H	A
J	O	O	S	T	V	A	N	D	E	R	W	E	S	T	H	U	I	Z	E	N	A
U	N	B	R	S	V	I	C	E	L	T	O	N	J	A	N	T	J	I	E	S	R

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Bryan Habana
Victor Matfield
Percy Montgomery
Naas Botha
Schalk Burger
Danie Gerber
John Smit
Siya Kolisi
Francois Pienaar
Eben Etzebeth
Tendai Mtawarira
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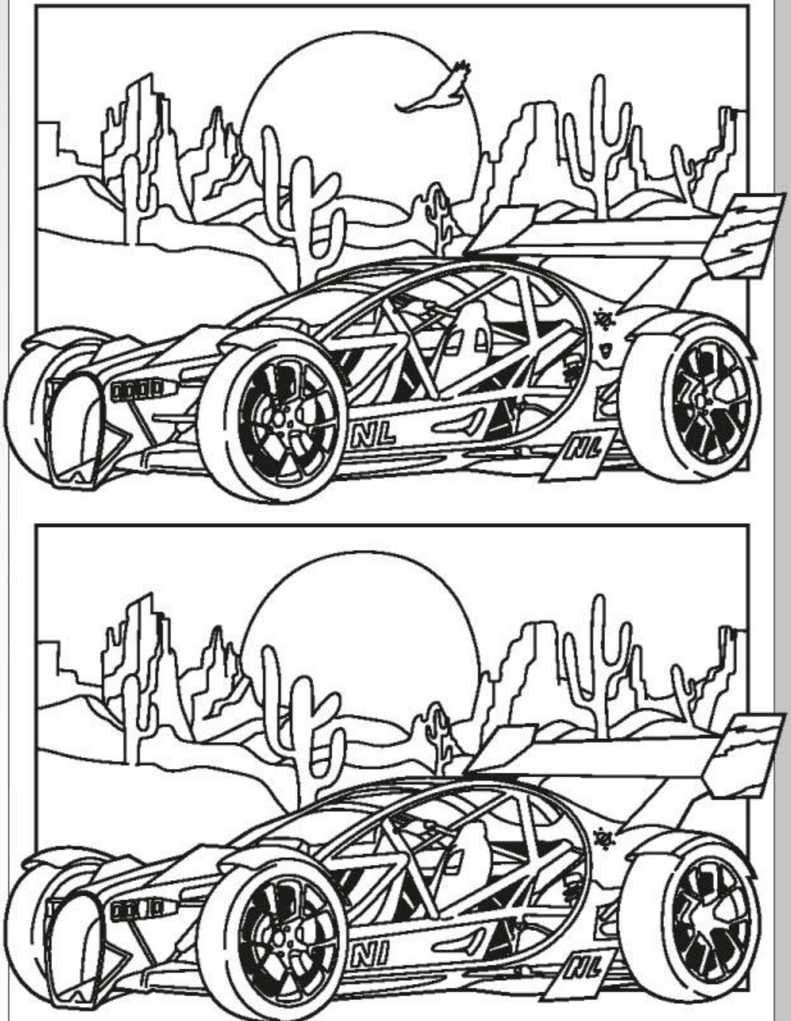
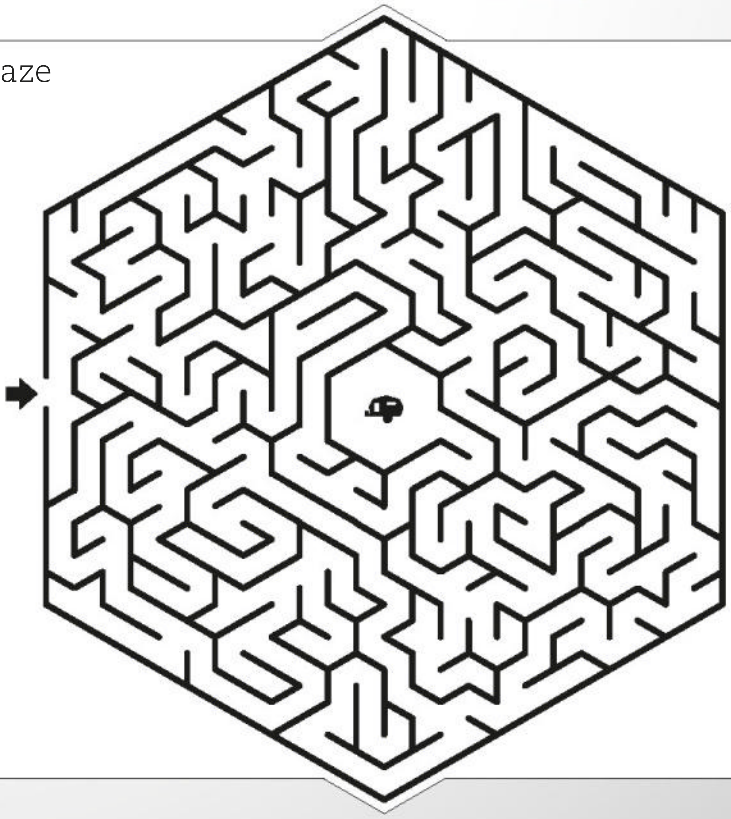
Cheslin Kolbe
JP Petersen
Francois Steyn
Joel Stransky
Mark Andrews
Chester Williams

Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts

COMMON OSTRICH *STRUTHIO CAMELUS*

- Ostriches are the largest living bird in the world, weighing between 113 and 136 kg.
- They can stand up to 2,7 m tall, though females tend to be shorter than males.
- Although they cannot fly, they are the fastest running birds in the world!
- Scientists have seen ostriches run continuously at speeds of 48-59 km/h and sprint up to 69 km/h.
- Ostriches mainly eat plants, including leafy greens, flowering plants, roots, grasses and succulents and occasionally snack on mice, frogs and fallen fruit.
- They do not bury their heads in sand. Ostriches dig their nests in the ground and will sometimes poke their heads in to check on or move their eggs.

www.nationalzoo.si.edu

The privilege of Africa

The opportunity to show first-time visitors around South Africa and letting them experience a small sample of its many treasures, is both an honour and a privilege, says **Mic van Zyl.**

I often state what a privilege it is to live in Africa, especially Southern Africa. The abundance of places to visit and things to see, explore and experience is almost never ending.

I often wonder if I'll ever get to see it all. This is made even more difficult by the fact that there are so many places that require re-visits taking up precious time that could be spent on visiting new ones.

By far the biggest South African fan that I know is my mom. She emigrated to South Africa from England in 1966. She has been back there once or twice, but she has never expressed the desire to return to England for good. Her parents, younger brother and older sister all spent time living in South Africa over the years, and I knew them well.

Her oldest brother never came here, and I recently learnt, after his passing in the middle of 2022, that he always desired to travel to South Africa. He especially wanted to visit the Kruger National Park, a place my English grandparents loved. I met him briefly a very long time ago when I visited England for a couple of weeks. He was a military man and served Queen Elizabeth in many parts of the world. He had seen much of the world but not all of it.

While the passing of these relatives from a distant place is somewhat sad, I am more saddened by the fact that my uncle never got to experience the wonder that is the Kruger Park. It is a firm favourite of my family (and mine) and it is one of the places that keeps robbing me of time to explore new places.

I've been fortunate in experiencing many, many stunning wilderness places in Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Tanzania but the Kruger retains its spot near the top of the list.

After my uncle's passing, his daughter, my first cousin, has decided to visit us here in South Africa for the first time along with her family. This has created a level of excitement within our family that I have not seen in decades. My cousin also expressed the desire to visit the Kruger Park to see the place that our grandparents so loved. As the family's intrepid travel expert, it has fallen to me to put together the Kruger Park portion of their "African Safari".

In arranging the necessary accommodation and travel arrangements for our Kruger visit, it dawned on me that I would be responsible for not only showing my relatives one of the best parts of South Africa, but also introducing them to our country, our people and our different cultures.

The back-and-forth communication with my cousin and her family around their impending trip has highlighted the fact that there exists much misinformation about our country. Sadly, much of it is inaccurate and often one-sided, leaning toward a negative sentiment. In this modern digital day and age, it is increasingly difficult to get away from bad and incorrect publicity.

I have accepted this task with much vigour and delight. For some or other reason my excitement around this Kruger Park visit is bigger than ever. I've realised that being given the opportunity to show first-time visitors our country – and a small sample of its many treasures – is not only exciting but truly a huge honour and a privilege.

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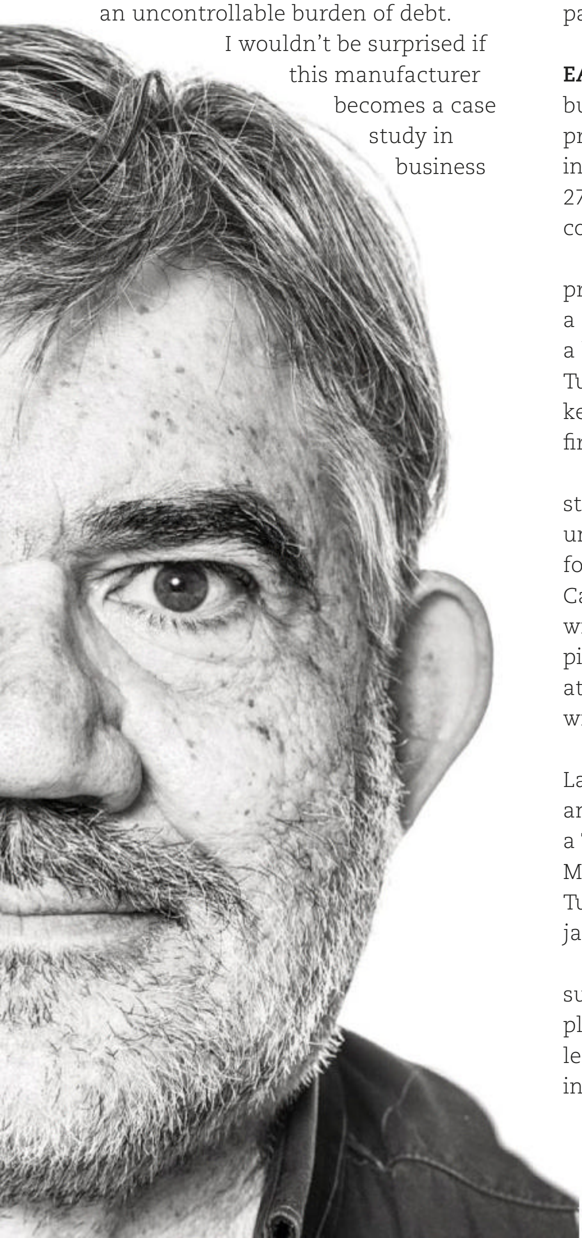
A container full of nostalgia

News of the possible demise of Tupperware takes him on a trip down memory lane, says **Neels van Heerden** as he also wonders about its impact on the environment.

I am astonished by recent reports suggesting that the Tupperware empire may soon crumble. Tupperware's website mentions significant financial troubles and an uncontrollable burden of debt.

I wouldn't be surprised if this manufacturer becomes a case study in business schools within the next decade or two. I also believe it won't be long before Tupperware products become collector's items. Just look at the prices of second-hand AMC pots at flea markets and pawnshops. So, hold on to yours.



EARL TUPPER ESTABLISHED his business empire in the 1940s, and the product was introduced in South Africa in 1964. Currently, there are still around 270 000 consultants active in just our country alone.

I first encountered Tupperware in my primary school days. There was even a compartment in my backpack where a lunch box fit snugly. Those square Tupperware containers were perfect for keeping sandwiches fresh until at least first break.

The larger rectangular ones were stored in our hallway cupboard and unearthed a few days before we set off for our annual holiday at the Scottburgh Caravan Park. My mother would fill them with boiled eggs, Vienna sausages, meat pies and chicken pieces – all consumed at a roadside table. Four growing boys, all with a fast metabolism.

We usually overnighted at Harrismith, Ladysmith or Estcourt's municipal parks, and Dad would produce boerewors from a Tupperware container to be grilled. Mom packed potato salad in a bulky Tupper, but beetroot salad was in a glass jar because it stained the Tupperware.

I've come across various opinions suggesting that consumer resistance to plastic pollution has built up over time, leading to a disdain of plastic containers, including Tupperware products.

Experts believe that youngsters prefer using glass containers to keep food fresh. However, I couldn't find any reliable sources that specifically mention resistance to Tupperware. I think cheaper plastic containers manufactured in China have eaten into Tupperware sales. Also, the Tupperware party concept has most likely become outdated after fuelling Tupperware sales for decades.

PLASTIC POLLUTION IS INDEED an international headache. American experts claim that there are 46 000 pieces of plastic in every square mile – weighing an astounding 269 000 tonnes. Ornithologists, marine biologists and environmental experts estimate that over a million seabirds and hundreds of thousands of marine animals die annually because of plastic pollution.

The so-called Great Pacific Garbage Patch, drifting somewhere between Hawaii and Japan, covers an area larger than Texas. For context: South Africa is barely twice the size of Texas. Plastic packaging and bags are the main culprits of pollution. I searched but couldn't find any information suggesting that Tupperware lids are found in large quantities in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. I did find a few articles criticizing Tupperware's inventor because the lids aren't attached to their containers.

In the same angry breath, they scold the makers of Bic pens and Heinz bottles because caps and lids are apparently easily misplaced.

Thank goodness toilet lids are designed in such a way that they don't easily go missing. Imagine how caravan parks would have to scramble to replace those lids.

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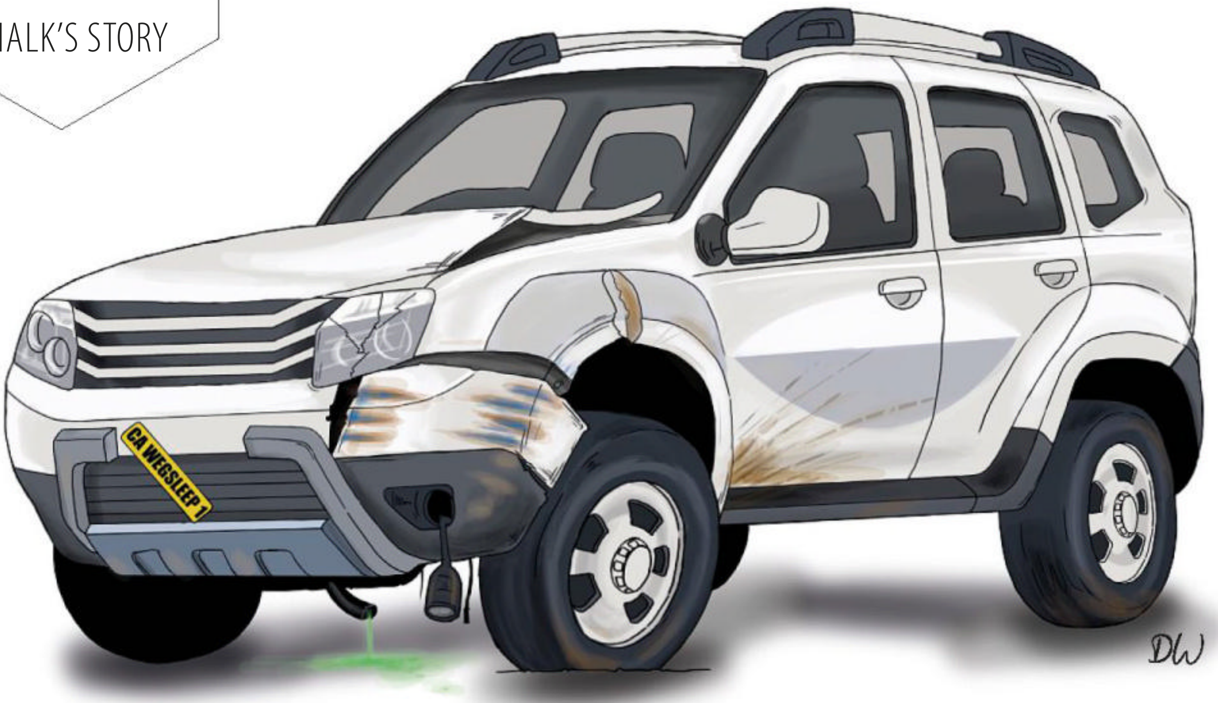


All's well that ends well

Heard the one about the bloke who set off from Cape Town for the South Coast, stopped at the Vaal Dam, crashed a car in Vanderbijlpark, and ended up camping in Vryburg? That bloke was **Schalk Jonker.**

Shortly after being appointed as a journalist for the forerunner of this travel magazine, the editor at the time sent me off to visit the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal for a few days, with the task of returning with an enticing camping article, in particular highlighting the joys of a winter getaway to the region.

This was one of my first assignments, and I was raring to go. I packed the car and hit the N1. The plan was to drive to Bloemfontein, spend the night, and then continue around Lesotho and through Harrismith to KZN.

My journey to Bloemfontein went smoothly. I found a room for the night and hit the road early the next morning. In the meantime, it had started to rain, and the radio reported similar weather across much of the interior. En route to Harrismith, my phone rang. It was my colleague, Leon Botha – calling to advise me to start making alternative plans for my final destination. A tropical storm had hit the South Coast the previous night, and the authorities were closing beaches.

My spirits sank, and I decided to re-evaluate my plans in Harrismith. At the local Wimpy, I opened my laptop and turned to Google Earth. I'd been traveling for two days, but I was nowhere near a final destination. KZN was out, and turning back was not an option. But I needed a story, and between here and Cape Town, there was only rain forecast for the next couple of days.

So, I tried to figure out how I could dodge the rain and end up somewhere worth writing about before returning to Cape Town. That's when the Vaal Dam caught my eye. I called Leon. "When was the last time we visited the Vaal Dam?"

It had been a while, he replied, but to be cautious. Our rule is to only write about places you'd take your mother to, and some of these campsites don't pass the test.

I quickly researched and found three spots that looked promising. I pressed on at full steam while the rain outside the car intensified. But alas… the situation at the dam was dismal.

Maybe the downpour made it look worse than it was, but I couldn't recommend any of these three places with a clear conscience to anyone. Never mind my mother; I wouldn't even bring my primary school maths teacher here.

By now it was late afternoon, and I found a guesthouse for the night.

THAT EVENING, I AGAIN opened my laptop, searching for a place – any place – in South Africa where it wasn't raining. Eventually, I saw that the sun would shine over Vryburg and its surroundings for the next few days. The town is on the way to Kgalagadi for people from the interior, after all. I could check out the overnight options available for them.

I drove through Vanderbijlpark the next day. Although it was raining and the road was very wet, traffic flowed smoothly on this Saturday morning. Well, it flowed until the moment I saw a blue Toyota Tazz suddenly appear in front of me from the left. I tried to swerve, but I was upon it and hit it with a tremendous crash. A proper T-bone.

I came to a stop on the pavement and jumped out of the car, furious and ready to confront the driver of the Tazz. To my surprise, I saw him storming towards me, equally enraged, looking quite prepared to attack me. How could that be? He drove out in front of me from nowhere…

But then I saw what had happened, and after talking to a couple of bystanders, I realised it was actually my fault. Well, not really… it was more the fault of the Vanderbijlpark municipality. You see, a few days earlier, there had been protests over inadequate service delivery, and some people were so angry that they had broken the traffic lights down to the ground, including those at this intersection.

Under normal circumstances, traffic authorities should have installed temporary traffic signs, but not here. So, blissfully unaware of the intersection, I kept driving while the man in the Tazz assumed I would stop.

After discussing the matter, we were less angry with each other.

> As the fire crackled in the silence and the ice-cold, bitter beer almost scorched my parched throat…

Fortunately, the car, which belonged to our magazine, still drove.

I called my brother, who lived about 100 km away, to let him know I was coming and to get the coffee ready. But on the way, the car started to complain – there was clearly more damage than I initially suspected. Moreover, our office manager called and said I should not drive the car any farther under any circumstances. She would arrange for it to be towed.

So, now I was without a car, sort of without a final destination, and without any zest for life on day three of my work assignment.

UPON ARRIVING AT MY brother's, I explained my situation, and my sister-in-law immediately offered me her car to drive to Vryburg – an offer I gratefully accepted.

After far too many cups of strong coffee, I hit the road again. I basically had just that day and the next, as our office manager had booked my plane ticket from Johannesburg for the day after.

I drove full speed towards Vryburg, but as it often goes with anyone who was just involved in an accident, everything now made me jumpy. I finally reached the town and quickly located the first campsite on my list. Oh, dear, I could tell at the gate that I would have to turn around. Garden waste and construction debris everywhere, and weeds grew waist-high in the 'campground'. I cautiously asked if I could take a quick look at the ablution facilities, but the caretaker swiftly replied that they were still under construction; I could use the bathroom in his house in the meantime. Nope!

The second campsite looked way better, and although it was late afternoon, almost dusk, I managed to set up camp and get my fire going before it was completely dark. Then I decided there could be a great photo of me by the fire that might work for the feature.

I mounted the camera on the tripod, set it to take the picture in 30 seconds, and took my seat on the camp chair, beer in hand, staring at the fire. I took a deep breath and felt a sense of calm wash over me. As the fire crackled in the silence and the ice-cold, bitter beer almost scorched my parched throat, I realised once again that this was one of my happy places.

Because, despite all the drama and uncertainty about what tomorrow might hold on this disastrous journey, I was here, now, completely content, happy, and grateful… even if it didn't look that way in the photograph.

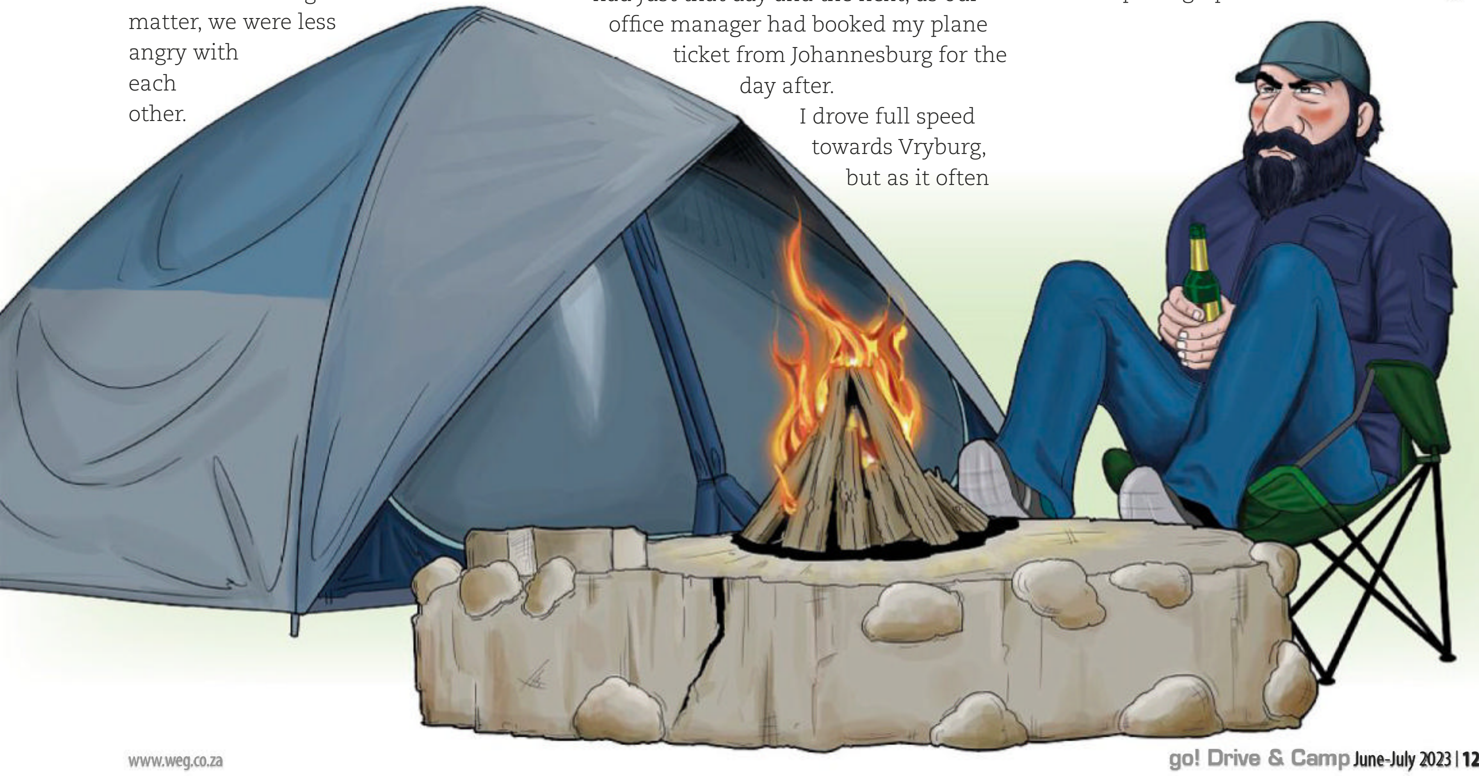
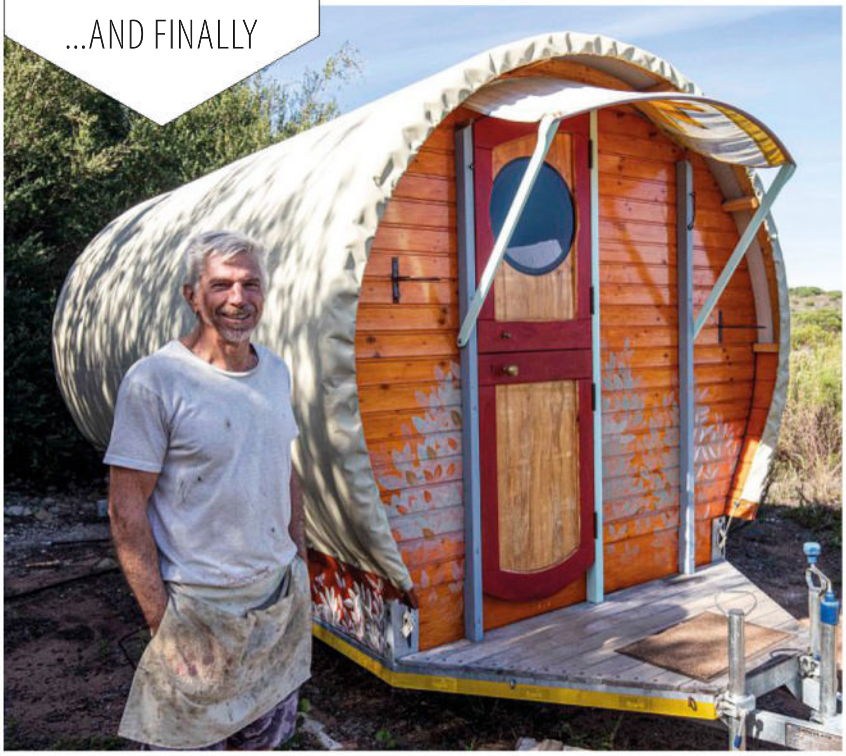
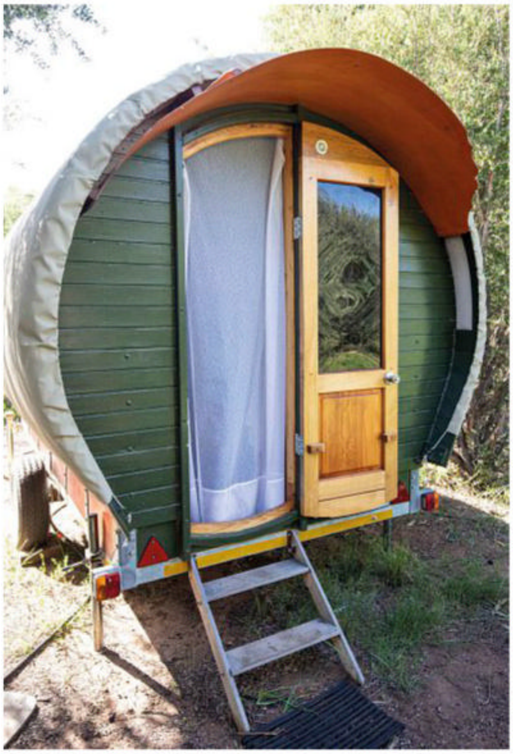


ILLUSTRATION DOMINIC WIENAND

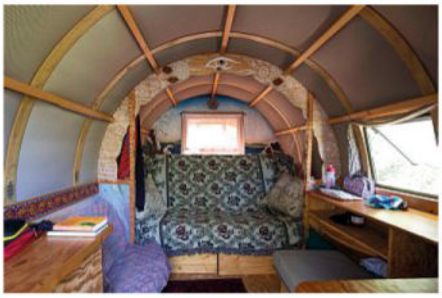




LAND YACHTS

Just outside Stanford, a talented craftsman specialises in constructing hand-built caravans. These one-of-a-kind creations embody the ultimate expression of happiness for Howard Dunbar.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**



Having spent weeks navigating his small yacht around Madagascar and nearby islands, Howard became fascinated by the clever use of limited space on boats. This experience brought eventually lead him to his custom-built land yachts.

So far, Howard has crafted more than 20 unique caravans, each one a bespoke piece of artwork. His yachting experiences influenced the interior design of his caravans, but he took inspiration from history for their overall aesthetic. His two models are based on the gypsy wagons of the old days as well as shepherd's huts: the gypsy is constructed of wood and canvas, while the shepherd's hut features corrugated iron.

Howard's first gypsy caravan, built for himself, included a double bed and two facing seats. However, it wasn't long before he sold it, marking the beginning of many more creations. To date, five of his caravans have found their way to the Glen Eden Farm camping site, offering guests a glamping experience.

Rather than following a traditional production line, Howard meticulously crafts each caravan by hand before embarking on his next project. The models vary in specific equipment, ranging from a basic setup to units with a bathroom and a completely off-grid power system, including an inverter and solar panels.

A client's brief serves as the starting point for Howard's creations, as he tailors each caravan to fit their needs perfectly – much like a tailor would sew a bespoke suit for you, he says. A suit that perfectly fits you.

The building process takes approximately three months from scratch, using locally sourced woods like cypress and pine or, more often, Scandinavian spruce – coincidentally, the same wood the Wright Brothers used for their first aircraft, the Flyer.

Howard's philosophy is simple and to the point: "I enjoy creativity and each of my caravans are different. In many ways I am an artist and through this creative process I find my happiness. My goal is the journey of living happily."

Have you spotted anything whacky on your travels? Tell us about it and send a photo to *go! Drive & Camp*, PO Box 740, Cape Town 8000 or **drivecamp@gomag.co.za**

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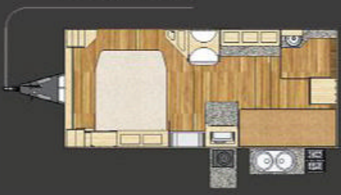

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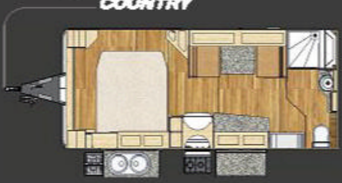

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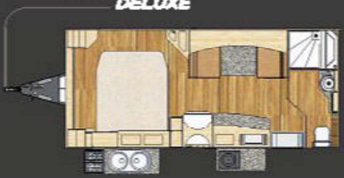

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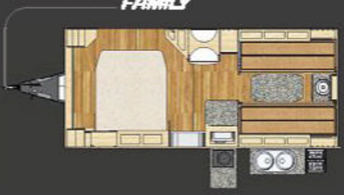

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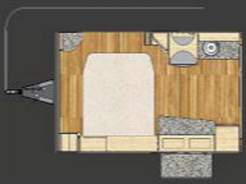

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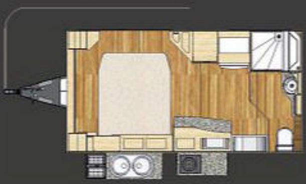

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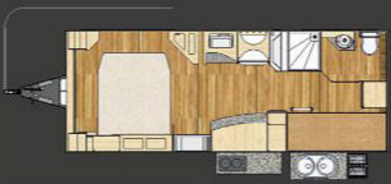
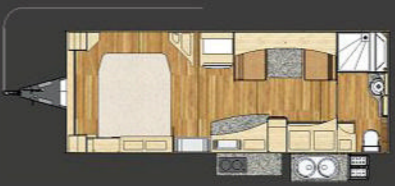


PINNACLE



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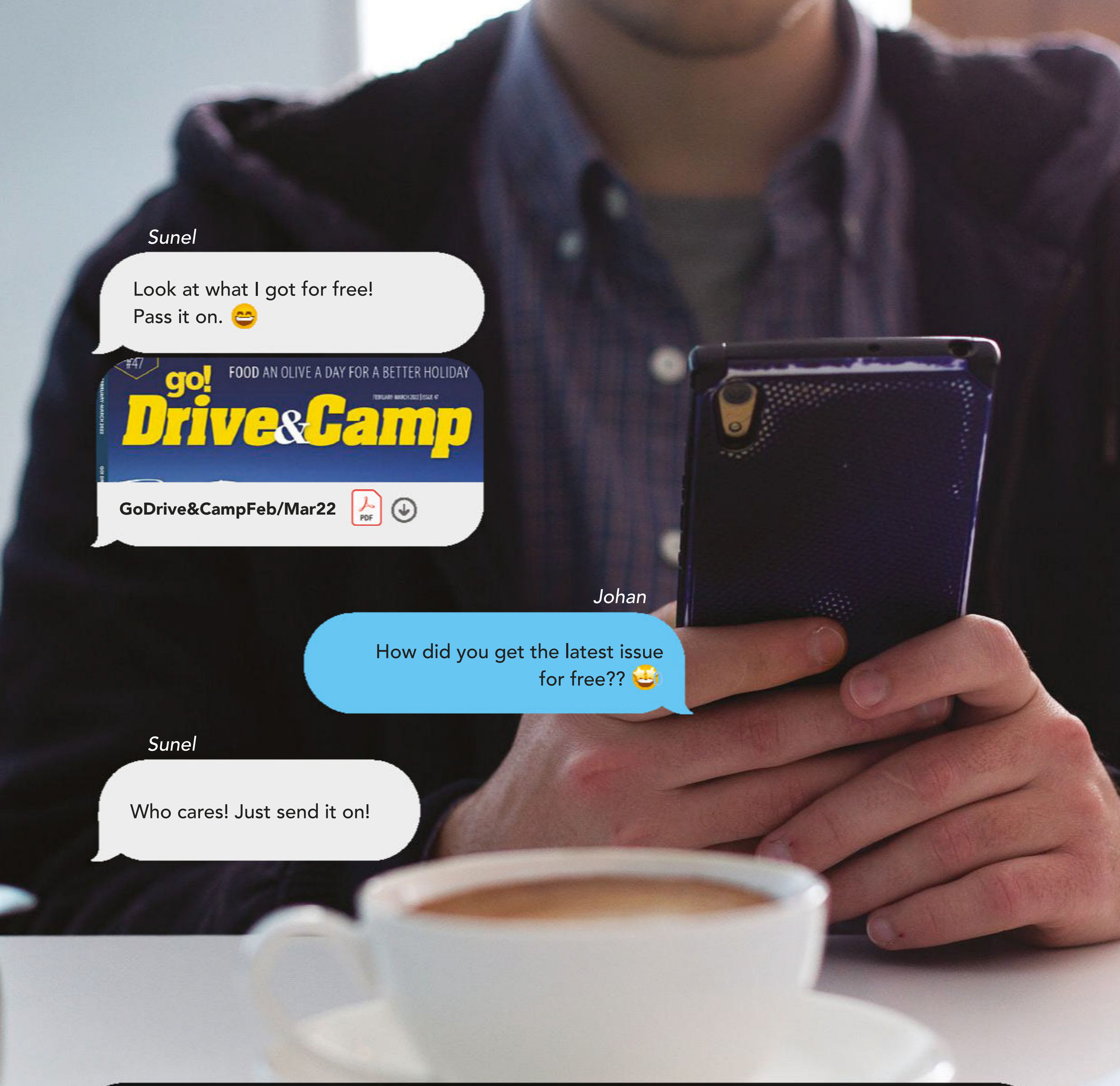
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